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鎌池和馬  
イラスト／灰村キヨタカ

# Toaru Majutsu no Index - Volume 4

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鎌池和馬

イラスト／灰村ギョウタカ

とある魔術の  
禁書目録 4

電撃文庫

Toaru Majutsu no Index 4

Upon receiving an outing permit from Academy City, together with his family, Kamijou Touma headed for the seas for a vacation.

The things that he saw there included Index becoming his mother, Aogami Pierce becoming Index, Kanzaki Kaori becoming Stiyl, Stiyl becoming an old man by the sea, Misaka Inouto becoming his son, and Misaka Mikoto became Touma's sister!?

Thus, the reason for "a certain magic spell".

It seems that the mysterious magic of "Angel Fall" started to develop in the middle of Kamijou Touma!?

Thus begins the 4th part of the highly popular school action story!



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Kamachi Kazuma

"In every creative activity the inner aspirations of the author would be expressed" so says a certain teacher of psychology. Keeping this in mind, by trying to read a Dengeki product over again, a different kind of anticipation would increase, but... ah! It is the sad aspiration of Kamachi if that is done...

(Products of Dengeki Bunko)

Toaru Majutsu no Index  
Toaru Majutsu no Index 2  
Toaru Majutsu no Index 3  
Toaru Majutsu no Index 4

Illustrator: Haimura Kiyotaka

Born in 1973. Had brought a camera to use for photographing information. Would immediately like to go on an outing to places that he wants to go to and do nothing but take pictures all the time, but, because of being busy in one way or another, would not be able to get the chance to do so by any means.

か12-4





“Oh dear, I wonder if a Touma-like  
sister character would be as frank?”  
Nun and keeper of the Index of Prohibited Books — Index

“What!?”  
Student of Tokiwadai Middle School in Academy City — Misaka Mikoto

“Would it be fine to be resting at this sort of place?”  
High school student of Academy City — Kamijou Touma



“...”

Magician — Kanzaki Kaori





Fugitive — Hino Jinsaku

“...What’s wrong?”

Kamijou Touma’s neighbor — Tsuchimikado Motoharu

“ ”  
...

Magician — Misha Kreutzev



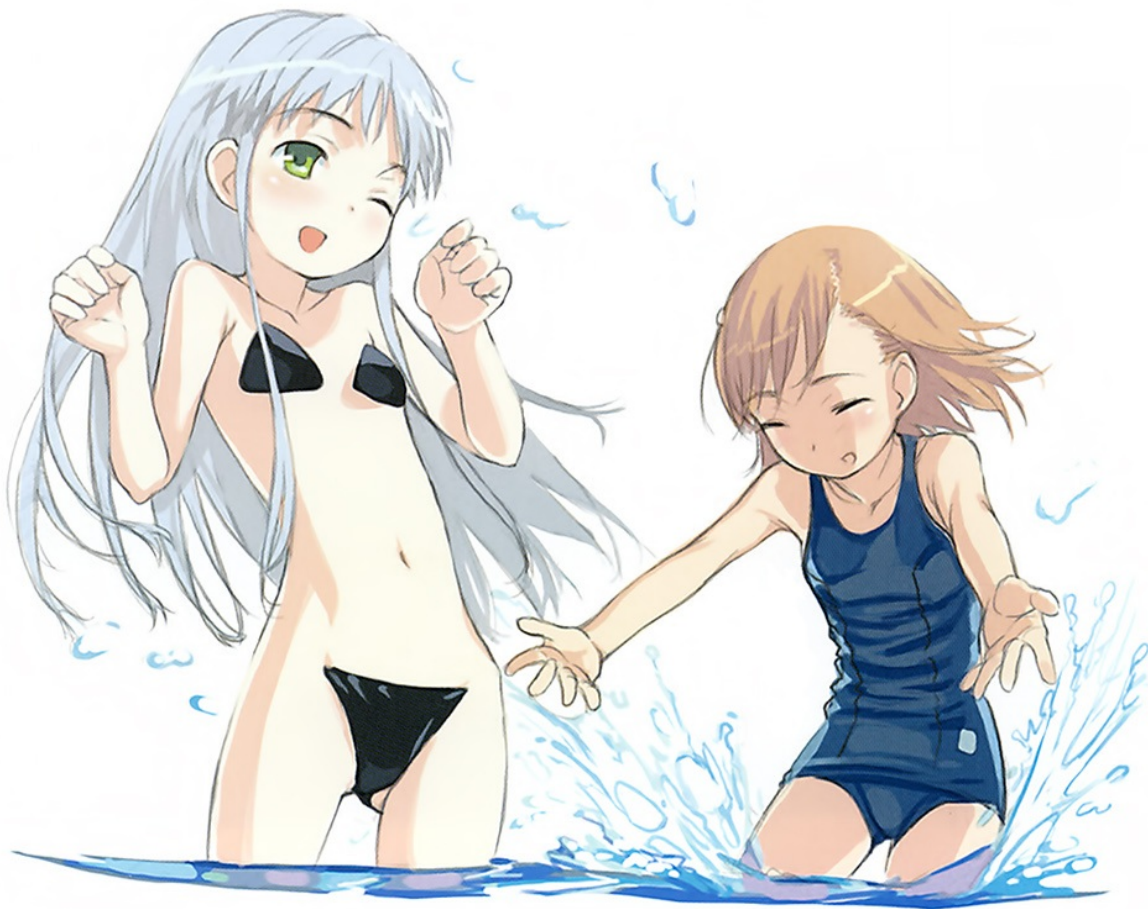


"U...gh!?"

"Ten seconds.  
I'll praise you if you  
can endure this."

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## **Prologue: Parallel World in Real World.**

Today was August 28th, and the sky was clear.

High school student Kamijou Touma was awakened from his slumber by a girl's voice yelling, "Oniichan~!"

"What was that shrilly voice just now?"

Kamijou, still half-asleep, slowly opened his eyes. The blanket that should have been covering his body was crumpled at his side.

The source of the voice was beyond the door.

His glance sideways revealed a six-tatami-mat-sized Japanese room. Worn-out tatami mats stretched out along the floor. On the ceiling was a fluorescent lamp covered with an old square covering for electric lamps. The wooden door was layered with specks of dirt and had a simple lock, the type that looked like one commonly used at toilets. A discolored yellow electric fan ventilated the room instead of an air conditioner. He breathed in deeply, and smelled the scent of the sea.

This was not the room in his apartment, nor was it a place in Academy City.

This was a guestroom on the second floor of a beach lodge named Wadatsumi, located somewhere in a certain sea coast within the Kanagawa Prefecture. Kamijou's parents and Index each had a separate room.

"Ah, yeah, we're already outside."

Kamijou concluded with a half-functioning brain.

The Academy City where Kamijou normally lived in lay in the western part of Tokyo. Therefore, those people who were used to living inland might love the idea of going to the seaside (though they could still enjoy the waters if they go to

the fishery schools, but not much).

As a countermeasure against abduction of students (samples) by a possible agent or spy, leaving the premises of Academy City was strictly prohibited. To leave, the student must first write up and turn in three written applications. After signing all of them, their blood has to be checked for authenticity of identity using a micro machine, and lastly, they need to have a guarantor to obtain a complete pass. However...

(I'm here right now.)

Kamijou stroked his right hand. The mark made by the mosquito needle that was used to draw his blood was barely noticeable even when touched.

Normally, the student was the one who'd beg the teachers for permission to leave, which somehow went like this: "Sensei, please allow me to leave~" However, it was a special case this time; the teachers actually ordered Kamijou to leave, like this: "Get out of the city, idiot!!"

Last week, Kamijou had defeated the most powerful Level 5.

The rumor regarding the denouement of battle had spread like wildfire despite the sparsity of students during summer break. With that, one might think that Kamijou's position had improved—but in reality, it had been the reverse.

"I see! If we defeat that Level 0, we can have Academy City's title of the strongest esper!" Because of that rumor, the town delinquents had gathered, and had gone after Kamijou, starting the game of survival hunt.

The higher ups, frazzled by this rumor, had contacted Kamijou, and said, "Hey, Kamijou Touma-kun, we'll handle the matters here by manipulating information, so in order to not cause any unnecessary uproar, can you go someplace else until the dust is settled?"

(They said that, but they were clearly showing their contempt by sending me here to a rundown lodge.)

Kamijou let out a big yawn. Even though it was summer, due to the outbreak of large jellyfish apparently inhabiting the waters near the shore, the number of customers visiting the place was close to zero this year. Putting that aside,

leaving Academy City required accompaniment by a guarantor—in this case, his parents. Never mind if they were cute girls or sexy older women, but why would someone spend their precious vacation time with their parents at this age?

For Kamijou, everything would be fine if things were just this simple.

The upshot of defeating the strongest Level 5 had forced a big project to be terminated. Some of the higher ups might have borne a grudge against Kamijou. Fortunately, thanks to the recent rumors, they could not take action immediately; the reason was that if they even thought of doing so now, it would be disclosed to the public immediately.

However, the still half-asleep Kamijou didn't feel even a fragment of uneasiness.

(Uhhh, I'm still sleepy... Is everyone up now?)

He absentmindedly recalled the sister in white that was supposed to be sleeping in a room across his own.

(Maybe she's still enjoying herself in dreamland,) he thought.

The sister in white would probably be filed under the "cute" category. Still, imagining himself shouting deep inside, "Thank you very much for the nice summer!" with tears of joy after seeing her childlike body in a swimsuit would be abnormally ridiculous.

He had been surprised at the sight of Index, who nervously came out of the fitting room after trying out the swimsuit they had bought in the supermarket—not to mention that he'd also been surprised at the number of zeros written on the price tag.

For your information, the white sister had no plans to tag along in the first place; she was supposed to stay in Academy City. Kamijou had planned to leave her—and her cat—in Komoe-sensei's custody. The swimsuit that they had bought was originally prepared for use in the school pool.

After reflecting upon it, it had naturally been the best choice. However, that white sister was not one of the students enrolled in the city; in other words, she was an outsider. That airheaded sister might be spotted and caught by Anti-Skill. That said, Kamijou still had no way to make her a pass to leave the city.

But the sister in white had not cared one bit about that fact. Kamijou had given up when he had seen a crying Index after she had been told to stay home.

As a result, he had tried smuggling the sister out of the city.

To put it simply, they had just needed to call a taxi, let Index hide in the rear seat or compartment, and wait until they got past the gate. Kamijou could not believe that he had considered carrying out that cheap method. However, things didn't really go his way; they had been stopped at the gate. It seemed that an infrared seeker and a MRI scanner were used to monitor the vehicles passing through.

(Oh, no, we're gonna be caught,) Kamijou had thought on tenterhooks. However, they had not actually been arrested; it appeared that Index had been registered as a guest with a guest ID.

Both Kamijou and Index had not known about that.

(I wonder who registered Index?)

The registration of a person required three things: fingerprints, a voiceprint, and retina patterns of that person. Well, voice and retina patterns could easily be forged by using a high resolution video camera, and even fingerprints could be duplicated by using either aluminum or carbon powder.

But why bother going through all those things?

Kamijou had felt dubious, but it hadn't manifested on his face. He could not possibly do something that would cast suspicion on them. Kamijou had just tilted his head as he had watched Anti-Skill restrain Index who had been putting up a struggle against the injection of a nanodevice (a transmission device) into her body (which actually does not hurt at all, thanks to the mosquito needle). They had finally passed the gate after that.

(Uwaa, I'm sleepy~)

He covered his head with a blanket as he drowsily recalled the events. He decided to resume his sleep. His nocturnal habit from summer vacation probably hadn't left him yet. As his consciousness was about to fade into nothingness, he heard the voice again.

"Oniiii-chaaan, waaake uuup!!"

The energetic call of a girl which came from the hall outside the room penetrated the barrier of the door, and reached Kamijou's ear.

Kamijou thought that maybe there was a useless brother and a reliable sister also staying in the lodge.

(Wait, what the hell is with that enticing combination!? Why do only weird girls like Index or Himegami Aisa flock to my place and not a girl like that?) Kamijou thought stupidly—and then remembered the fact about the large jellyfish outbreak that was driving away the customers. There were supposed to be no customers besides them today.

Then, a loud bang echoed across the room, accompanied by the sudden opening of the door.

(What!? What's happening!?)

Before Kamijou could bring his face out from the blanket, he heard light footsteps approaching.

"How long are you going to sleep, Oniichan? C'mon, get up! Get up! Get up!!"

The voice of a cute girl reached him along with the feeling of a body pressing on his stomach.

"Gwahh!?" Kamijou cried as he felt the shock from the conventional pro-wrestling technique usually seen in manga or dating sims.

Kamijou coughed violently inside the blanket. This was weird; Kamijou Touma didn't have a younger sister.

A soft sensation ran down his stomach, which was partitioned by just a flimsy blanket. Just thinking about which part of the girl was touching his stomach would be enough to make any healthy boy excited, but unfortunately for Kamijou, he was feeling too annoyed at something else to realize that. Kamijou's stomach screamed "Kyaah!" in surprise before rolling onto the floor.

"Dammit, who is it that's trying to disrupt my sleep?"

When he lowered his gaze to confirm the identity of the nuisance...

He found the culprit to be Misaka Mikoto.

"Ouch~ Hey, is that how you treat your sister who especially went over to your room to wake you up?"

The girl, who was wearing a red camisole, landed cutely on her back, and pouted her face in a manner that didn't suit the Misaka he knew.

"Wh—?"

He wanted to say, "What are you doing here?"

Anyway, his drowsiness disappeared instantly.

Misaka Mikoto: an ace student of the prestigious Tokiwadai Middle School, she was one of the seven existing Level 5s in the city. Although capable of discharging high-voltage electricity—and with a cranky temperament to boot—she was also a crybaby. During a certain incident, Misaka owed Kamijou a debt, and every time he tried to bring that topic up, she would peremptorily assault Kamijou with sparks.

And of course, she was neither Kamijou's genuine younger sister nor stepsister.

Due to his inability to comprehend the situation, Kamijou asked Misaka, "What? Ehh!? Were you also forced out of the city after the Sisters incident? ...Wait, is this some kind of exile island for the congregation of expelled students?"

"Haahhh!? What are you talking about? Is me hanging around you really that weird?"

"Can you stop that disgusting act of fawning? It's been giving me goosebumps for a while now! You're not supposed to be a sister character... You're a tsundere! You should just stick to your proper character."

"I don't understand what you're talking about."

Kamijou felt more goosebumps at Mikoto's apparent nonchalance.

After a moment of being dumbstruck, Kamijou's brain began to fire up.

Hypothesis ①: The authorities ordered Mikoto to pull Kamijou's leg with this canned joke.

Hypothesis ②: Mikoto decided to play the sister role (stepsister setting: on) upon Kamijou as an act of repayment.

Hypothesis ③: One of Misaka's clones for some reason or other had a glitch.

(I'm sure it's ①; there's no way it's ③. I know that Misaka's clones are sister characters. If that's the reason, that would be nice—no, there's no way I'd have a fantastic flag like that. But what if... what if it's ③?)

...

...Ohhh.

"Ha!?"

Kamijou returned to reality after a few seconds of reverie.

Shaking off the fantasy that summer had showed him, he shouted, "Idiot! Don't make fun of a high school student!! Do you think a middle schooler like you can bewitch me with that technique!?"

"Oniichan, you've been hyper ever since this morning."

"Dammit, stop lumping me into the 'happy to be called Oniichan' category! First of all, why are you calling me Oniichan!? And is that coming from a true incest setting or a false one!? Goddammit, I can see where this is going!! It's probably the latter, right? With a plot twist revealing that they were actually blood-related in the end stopping the possibility of the route! I'm pretty sure it is!"

"Haah, I wonder what language you're speaking in? That double dutch? Anyway, who cares about whatever I call you? I'm calling you Oniichan because you're my Oniichan."

"No, I'm not! Why are you my younger sister!?"

"Hmm?"

Mikoto poked her cheek with her own index finger as a sign of puzzling countenance.

"Does me being your younger sister necessarily require a reason?"

Mikoto heaved herself up from the floor.

"C'mon, now. If you have that much energy, then get up. Afterward, come down to the first floor for breakfast," Mikoto said nonchalantly, and left the room.

"What's happening here?" Kamijou muttered while gazing at the exit of the room.

(...Ummm. In the end, what was that all about?)

Unable to grasp what was happening, Kamijou changed into his casual clothes, and left the room.

Outside his room was a short rectangular hallway. Abutting its lengths were three doors belonging to guestrooms—six in total.

The wooden floor was black like that of an ancient temple, and particles of dust and sand were scattered randomly on the surface of the floor, which would cause anyone walking on it barefoot to feel disgusted.

The stairs were located at the end of the hall.

That was Kamijou's destination when he heard the door open behind him.

"Morning, Touma. Hmm? Your hair's disheveled at the back of your head."

It was the voice of his father.

Kamijou Touya. His age was somewhere around thirty. This middle-aged man, with a beard in the form of stubble, somewhat resembled Touma. His occupation in the exporting business had him leave the country thrice every month. His appearance was probably influenced by his job, as he looked intrepid yet somewhat intellectual.

Kamijou, who had lost his memory, did not remember the face of his father, so he had no way of attesting whether or not that person really was his father. In contrast, his father approached him without reserve.

To a high schooler, a college student who was two or three years older than them was already "a different person living in an unknown realm with a different lifestyle". Much more to a person with a significant age gap, Kamijou had no idea how to behave in front of him.

"Un~ Morning... eh?"

As he turned to greet his father, Kamijou's face lit up in astonishment.

"What's the problem, Touma?"

Kamijou's father, Kamijou Touya was knitting his eyebrows.

But let us put that Kamijou Touya aside first...

Kamijou cast his glance to the source of the anomaly, who was standing beside Touya.

"Index, what's with that appearance?"

Yes, the girl standing beside Touya was a silver-haired foreign girl with green eyes.

If you asked Touma to describe Index, he would just simply say, "She's a girl in sister dress." However, Index was not wearing her usual outfit today. Even though it was hot, she was wearing a flimsy half-sleeved one-piece dress that stretched down to her ankles. Draped around her shoulder was a cardigan, and on her head was a big white hat (tsubahiro). Let's be frank: she did not look like a healthy girl at all. He was about to ask her which sickly character she was or which country she was from when he suddenly remembered vaguely that his mother, Kamijou Shiina, had the same kind of attire yesterday.

Shiina's hobby was paragliding. One time, in a park near their old house where a public exhibition was being held, she had sat on a swing-shaped parachute with a motor engine on her back that ran the propeller. There was a report at that time stating that local people had witnessed the sight of a flying wife in the sky.

"Where did you get hold of that dress?"

Touya, confounded at Kamijou's odd question, asked instead, "Touma, is there a problem with your mom's dress?"

Kamijou eyed Touya with a "What!?" expression.

Touya turned his face to the girl beside him, and confirmed, "Yeah, it's your mom."

Kamijou returned his gaze to the girl. No matter how you look at it, she had the appearance of an airheaded foreign girl of fourteen years or less.

"Eh? Wait, Father, don't tell me you see this girl as Mom?"

"Is there anyone you're seeing besides that?"

"Wait, just wait a minute! I'm having a hard time comprehending this joke—if it really is a joke. If you're intending to continue performing this joke up until the end, I have no idea how to respond."

"Touma, tell me which part of your mom has a problem."

"Everything! Firstly, her appearance doesn't even look like that of a mother at all!"

Kamijou pinched the cloth that the fourteen-year-old girl was wearing.

"My, my, Touma-san, are you saying you don't like my sense of fashion?"

"Stop that, Touma, you're making Mom sad with that (worried)."

"No! I mean no matter how you look at it, she's younger than me! Even if this is a theatrical play intended for elementary students, she can't even pass as a high school girl that's already a mother!"

"My, my, Touma-san, are you saying I appear younger than my age?"

"Stop that, Touma, you're making Mom happy with that (jealous)."

"Aahh, geez!" Kamijou cried while burying his face between his palms.

Kamijou knew it. The first time he had seen Touya and Shiina was a month ago in a hospital, after he had been hospitalized for a head injury. At first, he had doubted them when they had told Kamijou that they were both almost the same age. Kamijou knew that his mother looked like an elder sister in her twenties.

But no matter how young his mother looked, Kamijou would not be convinced that his mother was a fourteen-year-old girl.

"Why are you suddenly burying your face between your palms, Touma? Are you already experiencing puberty-related problems? In that case, I have a souvenir here that I bought during my business trip. It's an amulet to ward off trouble."

"No thanks. I don't believe in amulets or any other superstitious stuff. I'm pretty sure it's just an ordinary product mass-produced in a factory somewhere... Eh, what's up with that palm-sized stone statue? It has the shape of male genitalia no matter how you look at it."

"Ahaha, I think so, too, but it somehow looks like an occult amulet."

"What protection does it provide? If I try keeping this thing as a replacement for a cell phone strap, not only will people think that I'm a freak, but I'll also be arrested!"

"What, Touma? A souvenir from abroad doesn't suit your taste? In that case, here's one that I bought from Akita."

"What is it this time...? Uhh, it's shaped like male genitalia again! This time, it's crafted from wood. Are you an elementary student who likes dirty jokes!?"

"Mmmu. Come to think of it, my co-workers had roared with laughter when I brought this to the office on the day of my return."

"Why are you pretending that you have unknowingly ventured to the realm of sexual harassment, you idiot father!?"

Because of Kamijou's sudden unexpected behavior, Touya made a perplexed face and asked, "By the way, Touma. The lady with you, is it alright not to wake her up?"

"I'm already telling you, she's there beside you! Never mind that; tell me where



Finally unable to withstand it, Kamijou grabbed the blue-haired man together with the door, and... \*Bam!\* The sound of the big man being thrown inside the room, followed by the violent slam of the door closing, reverberated through the hallway.

"T-Touma! Sit there in the corner. I'll preach to you not to treat girls in a brutal manner!"

"My, my, Touma-san, I didn't know that you have a violent passion towards girls."

Touma ignored the apparently flurried Touya and the fragile-looking Index and started reflecting.

(Calm down and think, Kamijou Touma. This must be a wide-scale prank. I don't know what Aogami Pierce is doing here outside the city, but if I keep making reactions like this, then that's exactly like falling to their plan.)

Ignoring his parents, who were worried about the man claiming to be Index, Kamijou made his way down to the first floor.

He thought, (I don't have time to play along with your prank.) But in reality, he was just too hungry and had no energy left to keep up with them.

Kamijou descended the narrow wooden stairs.

The first floor of the Wadatsumi lodge was built from wood and spanned a large area. Due to the absence of a door or a wall in the entrance and exit of the lodge, the sea breeze directly blew through it.

The self-proclaimed "younger sister", Misaka Mikoto (aka Biri Biri) was sitting at one of the tables (or was it a low tea table?) that were interspersed around the middle of the room. She was idly reading through magazines. Under the table, her feet, extending from her short camisole, were kicking back and forth. Her face clearly displayed extreme boredom. There was a TV nearby, but it was turned off.

Kamijou put on an annoyed face.

"Hey, Biri Biri, why are you sitting there as if it's natural for you to be there?"

"What, Oniichan? Are you still mad about earlier? It doesn't matter, does it? Whether I hug you, cling to you, or flirt with you?"

"..."

It seemed that she was intending to keep up this fawning act to the end.

"Uuu... I feel like a fool for going through all this trouble to leave the city."

Kamijou sighed heavily out of mental exhaustion. Mikoto sighed, too—out of boredom, though—closed the magazines, laid herself on the floor, and started rolling around.

"Ah, by the way, Oniichan, can I watch TV?"

"W-what is it, all of a sudden?"

"Mmmu, I can't find the remote anywhere. This TV has a 'This is for public use, so don't monopolize it, shorty brat' aura to it, so that's why I'm hesitating to turn it on myself without permission, Oniichan."

"..."

Kamijou clutched his head at Mikoto's persistent sister act.

"And why would the arrogant and self-centered Mikoto-sensei restrain herself from using the TV?"

"Mikoto? Who's that?" The Level 5 seemed to feign ignorance. "Anyway, I'm not really restraining myself; it's just that the owner of this lodge is scary. Oniichan, go ask him for permission to use the TV."

"...Correction, even if you change your character, you're still arrogant."

Even though he said that, Kamijou had a habit of watching TV during mornings, so he found himself uneasy if didn't watch it.

(Where's the owner?)

Kamijou scanned the place nearby. There was no one at the counter. Kamijou tilted his head as he pondered about the inattentiveness of the staff when he

suddenly smelled a burnt-like aroma of soy sauce wafting in from the exit.

(???)

Kamijou directed his attention to the exit. A slender and tall man was grilling something a small distance away from it.

"Ah, that's the owner. C'mon, ask him about the TV!" Mikoto said as she flapped her feet under the table.

Kamijou found it odd. True, the owner of this lodge was a tall and gruff man, and he may look intimidating at first glance. But was his hair originally shoulder-length- and on top of that, red in color?

Kamijou walked towards the man, creating creaks from the wooden floor with his footsteps.

"Excuse me."

The red-haired man turned to face Kamijou.

Kamijou saw the face of the person that was wearing a T-shirt coupled with half pants and that had a towel hanging on his neck...

...Which turned out to be the magician Stiyl Magnus.

"What the hell...!?"

Kamijou's head finally reached maximum confusion. The Stiyl Magnus that he knew was a red-haired Englishman two meters in height who could manipulate fire at his will to scorch his enemy to death without any compunction.

"Oh, you're up early. The sea is still cold, though—or maybe you didn't get any sleep because of the heat yesterday?"

But the magician that he used to know, fanning as he was grilling the corn, instead said that.

"Oops, this isn't grilled yet, so I can't serve it to customers. Hey, Maou! Come over here and serve our guest breakfast from whatever food that's available!"

The magician wearing beach sandals ordered one of the staff.

(What's happening? What's going on around here?)

Kamijou finally realized something was amiss. That war freak and pro-in-atrocity magician would never participate in this cheesy prank.

Kamijou's mind temporarily froze upon witnessing the shocking phenomenon before his eyes, but he came back to himself when he heard footsteps approaching from behind.

"Dad! You shouldn't say that in front of customers!"

(Who is it this time?) Kamijou thought.

When he turned around, he saw a tanned version of Misaka Mikoto that was wearing dark-purple shorts and an apron standing there.

"What? You have two roles? Ah, no, this one is Misaka Imouto, the clone one."

"Dad, this is a customer, so I should refrain from reacting, right?"

Her face twitched, trying hard to keep her smile from collapsing.

That Misaka Imouto, who was constantly impassive even in the face of death, was unbelievably making an expression of emotion.

(No way! What the hell is she wearing? That's what people call a "naked apron" style! Looking from this side... Uwahh, her tits! For a mere prank, would they normally go this far?)

This time, the original Misaka Mikoto's voice rushed in from inside the lodge.

"Oniiii-chaaan! Have you asked about the TV? I'm turning it on now~!"

Kamijou peeked inside the house, and saw Mikoto, who was on all fours in front of the TV, turning on the switch. It was probably set up so that a lot of guests could hear it, as the volume was so high that even Kamijou, who was a significant distance away from the TV, could hear it clearly.

"This is Komori reporting live. A jailbreak occurred on Shinfuuchuu prison

today at dawn. A prisoner convicted of murder, Hino Jinsaku is currently on the loose, and his whereabouts are still unknown. All middle schools in proximity have been issued urgent orders to cancel all club activities."

The reporter's name was Komori.

Yet the voice that's coming from the TV sounded like Kamijou's advising teacher, Tsukuyomi Komoe.

"Don't tell me...!?"

Kamijou hurriedly dashed to the front of the TV. Then, he saw it: a girl with a height of 135 centimeters and the physique of a twelve-year-old girl gripping a microphone and reading the report.

(What is Komoe-sensei doing there? Is this also a part of their prank? If that's the case, then this must be recorded beforehand? No, this is too real for a prank. Then, a radio wave jacking? For what reason? For the prank? That's weird, the scale is just too big to be a prank so early in the morning.)

Brushing aside Mikoto, Kamijou stood in front of the TV, and pushed the little button below the bottom of the screen to change the channel.

"Oniichan, what are you doing!? I'm eagerly waiting to watch 'Fade in Morning'!"

Kamijou ignored Mikoto who was suing for the rights of the TV. He repeatedly switched channels. Every program in the channel was weird in its own way: the supposed popular sexy newscaster was an old man, and the president of a certain country who was delivering a speech was a delinquent high school girl. Anyway, everything was mixed up and did not make any sense.

But what struck Kamijou as the queerest was the live report. Behind the reporter who was sedately reading the news (this one looks like a truck driver) was a preschool child gripping a large hose, a group of old hags wearing sailor uniforms fiddling with their cell phones, and a Prime Minister that Kamijou frequently saw in the news playing a guitar.

The site of the live report was in front of the train station. Behind the newscaster were throngs of people, and all of them were somewhat mismatched.

(Hey, hey. It's the same no matter what channel I tune in to!)



Even if that was a grand-scale joke intended for April Fools, the stupendous number of extras participating would cost a large sum of money. Moreover, the fact that a Prime Minister was also there proved that the entire story was very ridiculous.

It was obviously not a prank.

(But if this is not a prank, then what is it? Index proclaims herself as my mom, Aogami Pierce is Index, and even Stiyl is the owner of this lodge!)

It was as if everyone, be it inside or outside, had switched places.

If that was so, then what could be the explanation?

Kamijou grabbed his head with both hands. Trying hard to come up with a plausible scientific explanation seemed to be impossible.

# Chapter 1: Hex Suspect of the Magician World.

## Part 1

Even if the reality before your eyes was inexplicable, time would still flow unremittingly.

Putting aside Kamijou, who was at a loss at what was happening, Touya, Index, and Mikoto decided to play at the beach. They ordered Kamijou to change into his swimming trunks, secure a place in the beach, and stand under a beach umbrella.

Under the beach umbrella and sitting cross-legged above the leisure sheet was Kamijou, alone.

(Is it alright to be wasting my time like this? I don't understand what's happening, but the world's in deep crisis right now. That said, I don't know of a means to deal with it.)

Due to the large jellyfish outbreak, there were no other people besides Kamijou at the beach today. A strident music song played lonesomely from the speaker, fastened from one of the trees that stood interspersed throughout the beach. Being like this, it seemed like the world was at peace; however, the TV program that he had seen earlier reminded him that it was not.

No matter what channel you tuned in to, all you'd see were mismatched people.

If all the channels were like that, it would mean that this commotion was occurring not only on this beach, but throughout Japan—no, in the worst case scenario, probably the whole world.

(...U-n. Maybe I'm just seeing a hallucination?)

(If there was trouble occurring throughout the whole world, then that scale would be simpler. If "being mismatched" was normal for other people, even if you certainly thought you were right, you'd rethink that maybe the fault's within you,) the easy-to-be-influenced Kamijou thought.

Kamijou, sitting cross-legged, heard footsteps made from the crunching of sand approaching from behind.

"Hey, Touma! Good work on securing the place; well, we're the only people today, so I guess it wouldn't make a difference even if you didn't. Wahahaha," laughed the big man.

Kamijou was petrified.

"Hoo~ What is it, Touma? You like my swimming trunks that much?"

Kamijou totally ignored Touya, and directed his gaze to the girl beside him. He looked at Index who was supposed to be his mother, Shiina.

(H-hey, wait, what's with that ungodly swimsuit!?)

Index was wearing a black bikini unbefitting her small figure.

A bikini usually comprises of string and cloth; however, in Index's case, the string was made up of a transparent nylon. Therefore, the cloth seemed like it was taped to the part it was concealing when seen from afar.

Frankly, anyone who saw it would say that it was an adult swimsuit.

(Kuhh... Is this what you call the realm of gap and unbalance!? No, wait. This isn't the time to be glad. How did that Index, with zero pocket money, get her hands on that swimsuit?)

Index palmed her cheek with one hand as she gazed at the face of the perplexed Kamijou.

"My, my, Touma-san. Your face states that you have a problem with my swimsuit."

"That's beyond the problem! Where did you get that swimsuit? It's different from

what you used yesterday!"

"My, my. I just prepared two or three different swimsuits beforehand."

"Ahahaha," laughed Touya. "Yep, Mom still has her sex appeal active. Good to know it's worth giving this to Mom as a present even though it cost me a lot to buy it."

Kamijou's eyes gleamed the instant he heard that.

"Confounded father! What do you think you're doing bribing people!? More importantly, how did you know Index's three sizes!? Don't tell me you two went to the supermarket together without my knowledge!"

"My, my, Touma-san. If you keep pushing your thumbs against your dad's carotid artery, it won't be long until he meets his maker."

"This lolicon is after your body, so don't stop me, Index!! Gaaaah!" Kamijou roared with a vehemence that could even spit fire from his mouth. "Shit, I knew it was weird that Mom looked younger than her age. Confess already, she's just twenty years old, right? In that case, how old was Mom when I was born!? Answer me, you pedo father!!"

"Bwrghgh. C-calm down, Touma. Here, have this souvenir that I bought from Ireland. It's an amulet to preserve family welfare."

"What's this naked figure of a woman!? Are you implicitly telling me that you're dying to do that kind of thing!?"

"N-no. It's their goddess of fertility named Sheela na Gig, I thi—Ggggahh!!"

Misaka Mikoto walked towards Kamijou, who was one step away from making a wrong decision in life.

"Are~ What's the fuss about, Oniichan? Ah, don't tell me there's an event revealing that you were not actually blood-related?"

"You, too, stop that forceful inclusion of 'stepfamily setting'! By the way, what's with that attire? We're not in a school pool anymore, so why are you in a school swimsuit?"

"Eh? Is it weird?"

"Kuh. So you're playing the cute sister character to the end, eh?"

Kamijou, cast off his hands from Touya's neck, slumped his body like an unmotivated octopus before breathing out a sigh. Touya, coughing violently while grasping his neck, looked at his son...

"Uhh, It's my careless mistake... I didn't know Touma had this mother complex..."

"My my. I didn't know that the Oedipus Complex, Freud-sensei's psychology theory that boys unconsciously hated their fathers, was real."

"This is bad. The side effect of living a solitary dormitory life for years has probably caused Touma to develop a strong desire for family love."

"Why is everyone like this...?" Kamijou said, gnashing his teeth. "On top of making a completely amateur diagnostic, they label people as mother-cons! Everyone, line up in that corner! I'll bury all your bodies with the hole that I dug using this mini-spade!"

"Kyaaahh!" the three happily screamed as they scampered to the sea.

"I won't let you escape!" Kamijou pursued them with a mini-spade in one hand—when he suddenly realized that he was forgetting something.

Kamijou then heard the crunching of sand from behind.

That's right; Aogami Pierce was also here for some reason. Kamijou froze upon remembering that.

If memory served him right, Index had worn a white one-piece swimsuit yesterday.

Today, Aogami Pierce was wearing the same sister suit that Index had worn.

Therefore, the dress that Aogami Pierce would wear when at the beach would be...

(W-wait. That's stupid... What on earth is this answer that you'd arrive at from this syllogism—?)

"Touma, Touma! I'm late, sorry for waiting."

Horrifying. This cute manly voice was indeed too horrifying.

(Don't turn around,) Kamijou thought.

He would probably lose a precious something after witnessing Aogami Pierce. Yet, as if facing a terrifying reality, he slowly swiveled his head around like a rusted robot.

In his view was...



A devil in a one-piece swimsuit.

".....Hahhh!?"

When Kamijou regained his senses, the sun was already positioned at the highest point in the sky. In his hand was a mini-spade, and near his feet was the head of a swooned Aogami Pierce sticking out of the sand.

"Did I do this? I wonder what I've done..."

Judging from the angle of Aogami Pierce's neck, he was buried perpendicularly in a pit. Kamijou mulled over the issue, but he didn't consider exhuming his friend; he was sure that he would lose something precious after seeing his getup.

(That's right, where's Fath—eh, what the hell is he doing enjoying himself while playing beach volleyball with Index and Mikoto!? Moreover, his eyes are filled with seriousness, and he's directly aiming for Index! D-damn! My long-awaited summer vacation is ruined because of him!)

(Anyway, I have to bury that useless lolicon father at all costs!)

Kamijou, with a mini-spade in one hand, ran towards the direction of the three. On the way, he had a feeling that he was overlooking something more important...

"Unyaaa-! Kami-yan, I finally found you!"

...when a weird voice rushed in. If one asked what was weird, the origin of the cat-style-like speech was not a girl but a man.

(W-what? That voice just now sounds familiar. Could it be...!?)

Kamijou stopped his feet and turned around. His gaze reflected the image of a big man with a height of 180 centimeters running towards Kamijou's location.

"T-Tsuchimikado?"

Tsuchimikado Motoharu: Kamijou's next-door neighbor, and his classmate (he

thought so, but because of his memory loss, he couldn't say for sure). His long arms were distinctive—they could even reach his knees when straightened out—and he had a tall height and spiky blond hair. He was wearing an aloha shirt and half pants. Light blue sunglasses covered his eyes. Dangling on his neck was a gold chain that matched the outfit of delinquents. Kamijou knew that he didn't have one bit of delinquency in him and was just wearing it because he wanted to become popular with girls. He had a stepsister named Tsuchimikado Maika, who was frequently seen in a maid outfit, that turned Tsuchimikado into a besotted and doting brother whenever they were together.

"Hey, wait a minute! What are you doing here outside the city? How did you leave Academy City? Is Maika with you!?"

"If possible, I'd like you to not call my sister so casually, but... there's not much time left, Kami-yan. I have one thing to ask: do you see me as 'Tsuchimikado Motoharu'?"

Kamijou couldn't comprehend the point of Tsuchimikado's question.

"Haah!? What are you talking about? Putting aside that nonsense question, how did you get he—?"

"Then that means... No, that's not possible..." Tsuchimikado mumbled to himself. "Well, whatever. Anyway, Kami-yan, you must get out of here ASAP. It's dangerous. What's dangerous, you ask? Soon, an irate nee-chin who went ballistic will come at you at any moment!"

"Hah? Nee-chin? Hey, don't tell me you did something?"

"Quit asking and just listen to your neighbor's advice!"

Tsuchimikado was probably in a state of confusion, as he couldn't convey his intention properly to Kamijou.

Kamijou just sloped his head to one side. Seeing his reaction, Tsuchimikado flusteredly badgered Kamijou to a degree that made his blue sunglasses slip off.

"Eeii! Kami-yan, did you notice something peculiar when you woke up this morning!?"

"Hmm? Yeah, everyone was somewhat strange, as if their insides (identities) and outsides (appearances) were swapped. Huh? Why do you know this?"

Kamijou glanced at the seaside where the three are playing beach volleyball.

"Just like I said! Nee-chin thinks you're the culprit who cast this 'swap' magic!"

"Ha?"

(Culprit?) Kamijou who was completely in the dark continued tilting his head. Then...

"I finally found you, Kamijou Touma!"

A girl's animosity-filled voice rushed in from his side.

Tsuchimikado faced the sky in despondency. Kamijou turned to the direction of the voice.

A girl with a height of 170 centimeters, too tall for her gender, was standing there. Her long hair was ponytailed in the back with a length that reached her hips. She had a nicely shaped body. One could easily associate her white skin with that of a princess, but mysteriously, unlike the conventional princesses, there was not one bit of transience or fragileness present in her.

The reason must have been because of her clothing style. She wore a half-sleeve T-shirt on upper body with the lower part of the T-shirt rolled up and tied exposing her navel. On her lower body was an overused jeans... but one lateral half was cut deliberately, exposing one of her white legs. Boots like those from wild wild west movies adorned her feet. An extra belt tilted on top of the other one that was fastened around the waist, had a holster to hold a handgun.

But the thing that was supposed to be in there was not a gun, instead, a Japanese sword. One could tell at first glance that this sword, somewhere around two meters in length, was an extraordinary one. Combining it with her pony-tailed jet-black hair, she resembled a samurai during warring state period.

That Bakumatsu <sup>[1]</sup> swordgirl was glaring at Kamijou.

With rage in her face, she unreluctantly edged up to Kamijou's.

What was scary was that this girl had been repeatedly touching and letting go of her sword.

"Kamijou Touma! I know you are the one behind this swap magic... this Angel Fall! In the count of three, turn everything back to normal or else...!"

The girl was already before Kamijou's eyes. Her irate words had the subtext that she would even beat Kamijou before she could finish counting. Kamijou was fazed. Being approached by an angry person with a huge sword, anyone would be scared.

"Eh? What is this person saying? Tsuchimikado, is this the 'nee-chin' you're talking about? ...Hey, don't run away by yourself, bastard!"

Tsuchimikado, who was furtively distancing himself while Kamijou was focused at the girl, froze at Kamijou's shout, then turned around. His sunglasses light blue lens glittered.

Kamijou gazed at the seaside. The distance between Index and others and Kamijou was more or less a hundred meters away. Yet, Kamijou felt for a moment that other side was a distant paradise that he wouldn't be able reach even if he spent an eternity.

Kamijou felt the desire to flee there, but doubled back on that thought. There wouldn't be any difference. A different problem would be waiting for him there.

The girl in front of him had probably calmed down and said, "Ah, I see. That's right. I apologize. It seemed my rage clouded my judgment. For the record, let me ask you: who do you see me as?"

(Who, you ask...?)

Kamijou sloped his head at the strangeness of the question. From the way she had asked, she assumed that her appearance might look like a different person. Well, first of all, Kamijou, who had suffered memory loss after a certain incident didn't even remember that girl. Throwing a question like this to him, he had no answer but to tilt head.

The Samurai girl seemed to have sensed something from Kamijou's reaction. She said in an impatient voice, "...Geez, Putting up a lame act. You called me 'nee-

chin' a while ago. My name isn't nee-chin. I am Kanzaki Kaori, an Anglican magician from Necessarius. I am aware that it was a short term encounter but don't tell me you've already forgotten about me."

Kamijou was shocked at Kanzaki's words, in two ways.

First, that queer Samurai girl, a mix-of-Japanese-and-English existence was actually his acquaintance.

Second, that she revealed her identity as an Anglican magician.

The Anglican Church's organization Necessarius was a group that specialized in dealing with magicians, and Index and Stiyl Magnus were both members. Speaking of which, though Kanzaki's weird outfit didn't fit current society, she did have the same job as Index and Stiyl (though mentioning this may be rather rude).

But if that was true, then there was another suspicion within Kamijou's heart.

Why was Tsuchimikado related to this real magician?

At that moment, Tsuchimikado sighed, and said, "Oi oi, Kanzaki nee-chin, you don't have to be so combative."

"What are you saying, Tsuchimikado? I'm just trying to solve the current problem. To me, you lack the sense of being a magician."

Hearing that, Kamijou gasped.

"Oi, what did you say? What about being a magician?"

Kamijou stared at his neighbor Tsuchimikado in disbelief. In response, Tsuchimikado let out a sinister smile.

"That's right. I'm a member of Necessarius too."

Tsuchimikado said casually.

It took a while for Kamijou to realize the meaning of what Tsuchimikado had said.

The blue sunglasses were glittering.

The sunlight reflected from it became a weird color.

“Wait...wait a second...you’re saying that you’re a magician?”

“Yeah.”

Tsuchimikado straightforwardly nodded his head.

“Did you think that there aren’t any magicians inside Academy City? It’s the complete opposite. Academy City is the enemy of the world of churches, so it isn’t strange to have one or two spies planted inside, right? Besides me, there seems to be many others.”

“...But...”

What Tsuchimikado said didn’t make sense.

But to hear Tsuchimikado that he knew from his normal everyday life say such logical things made Kamijou feel extremely unusual.

“Why do you think I could get to the 'outside' of Academy City? Don’t you find it strange? Actually, thirteen hours ago, I was in Windsor Castle in England, together with Kanzaki nee-chin. Of course, I didn’t write a permit, I didn’t get nanomachines injected in me. I used a technique of getting out by the back door.”

“...”

Even if he heard it from the person himself, Kamijou couldn’t believe that this was true. To Kamijou, Tsuchimikado Motoharu was just his hostel neighbor in his everyday life. Purposely dressing up like a hooligan to be popular with the girls, frantically running over to Kamijou’s room for help when his non-blood-related sister Maika just got summer flu. Anyway, he seemed like an ordinary guy, and shouldn’t be related to that abnormal world called magic.

Thus, Kamijou unconsciously racked through his brain for an excuse.

“Wait...hold on! You did go through the lessons and training of Academy City,

right? I heard that espers can't use magic! So—”

“That’s right. Thus, to sneak into the enemy’s territory, I, Tsuchimikado, was forced to give up on magic and the title as the Onmyoji professor of the highest order. But in the end, I got a Level 0 ability that I couldn’t use at all, what a loss!”

The dorm neighbor let out a sinister smile.

“But in this world, in order to earn the trust of others, some spies can hide their names for at least fifty years! If I couldn’t endure such a sacrifice, I’m too naïve.”

“But you...”

Kamijou wanted to ask something else, but couldn’t continue on.

Seeing Kamijou look so surprised, Tsuchimikado let out a self-mocking smile and said, “That’s right. This is Tsuchimikado’s real identity. A tool that reports every single action that Academy City does to the Anglican Church. Basically, I’m a spy.”

A spy.

The word that didn’t have any surreal sense, the word that could only be heard in a movie.

At this moment, Kanzaki completely ignored Kamijou’s shock and asked Tsuchimikado dully.

“Let me ask you again, Tsuchimikado. Is it really alright for you to reveal your real identity like this?”

“No problems. Besides, the higher ups knew about it, they just didn’t take action. Right now, my situation is as if they’re playing me in their palms.”

Through the blue shades, Tsuchimikado’s eyes narrowed.

“Since I haven’t met any harm up till now, it means that the information I got isn’t enough for them to kill me...it’s true that we won’t be able to fight them

once they know the truth about the Imaginary Number District - Five Elements Institution. Besides, it's just a job, and I don't want to lose my life because of it. It's about time to retreat, there's some danger in probing further. Besides, we won't be able to do any damage to Aleister. Really, Academy City's dark side is not fun to deal with."

"..."

Tsuchimikado's words made Kamijou tremble.

Kamijou didn't hear any explosive inside story. Actually, he didn't understand anything at all. However, since Kamijou couldn't understand Tsuchimikado's words, it showed that Tsuchimikado and Kamijou weren't people of the same world.

"...So this means...that you're a real magician?"

"A somewhat unique, rather one-of-a-kind magician."

A spy.

Even if he knew this, the impression that Kamijou had of Tsuchimikado Motoharu wasn't broken at all. To Kamijou, Tsuchimikado was still his dorm neighbor, a good brother to his little sister Maika, a bad good guy that provided shelter for his little sister when she snuck out of the girls' dormitory.

Even if the man himself had just said his real identity, it didn't affect Kamijou's impression of him; that showed how much he had integrated into Academy City, and that was truly the most terrifying point.

"Hm, let's not talk about this first."

Tsuchimikado briskly changed the topic.

"Right now, the main point is how we should handle the substitution in roles? Kami-yan, you should have noticed this scenario, right?"

"Hold on...hearing you say that, I suppose you're clear about what's going on?"

"Ah, it's not really that. Right now, we know only one thing, that the substitution

in roles isn't the main aim here, it's just a side-effect nya."

"Side-effect? For what?"

Kamijou frowned. He could understand the meaning of 'substitution in roles'. Everyone wasn't right when he woke up that morning, he saw some strange things when he turned on the TV. But what did he mean by 'side-effect' and 'main aim'? Using those terms made it seem like it was all man-made.

Seeing Kamijou look suspicious, Kanzaki couldn't help but sigh.

"Tsuchimikado, it seems really hard for anyone to understand if the person hasn't heard of the Kabbalah tree theory."

"I know. But if so, wouldn't your original theory be wrong?" Tsuchimikado laughed and said, "How can a magical amateur like Kamijou Touma cause such a large spell that changes the inside and outer appearance like Angel Fall?"

Shocked by Tsuchimikado's words, Kamijou stared intently at him.

"What? What has this got to do with me?"

Kamijou questioned Tsuchimikado, but the one who responded was Kanzaki, who didn't look convinced.

"...There's a boy, for some reason, there were a lot of things that commonly happened around him. Right now, with that boy as center, something else occurred. The entire world is affected by this, and the only one not affected by this is this boy in the middle of the commotion. In this situation, we suspect that this boy is the culprit, isn't it unreasonable?"

"Oi...oioi! Hold on! You're saying it really strangely! What 'something happened' again? By your explanation, are all these man-made?"

"Do you think that these are natural disasters?"

Kamijou inadvertently remained silent.

Tsuchimikado forced a smile and said, "Oi, Kami-yan, don't be so silent! Or you'll be blamed for this!"

“Tsuchimikado, who did you say will be blamed for this? Right now, the only people in the entire world who aren’t affected by Angel Fall is—”

“Hold up! What’s that ‘Angel Fall’ which you talked of so many times?”

Kamijou picked out a term from Kanzaki’s words, and the two magicians turned over to look at Kamijou.

“Ah—Angel Fall is...it’s rather troublesome to explain it. Kanzaki, I’ll leave it to you nya—”

“Tsuchimikado, don’t be so old-fashioned when you talk.” Kanzaki looked bored as she sighed, and said, “Basically, this substitution in roles phenomenon is a human-made event caused by someone using magic.”

“Human-made event?”

Kanzaki silently nodded her head.

Kamijou looked like he didn’t understand, and Kanzaki continued, “Right now, the entire world is affected by some magic, creating this phenomenon. Even the records of the library of England have nothing regarding this. As the specific spell and construct of the spell is still a mystery, we went according to the features of the phenomenon and temporarily called this spell Angel Fall.”

“...You didn’t know how it was made, but you knew what’s going on?”

How far away.

Such a conversation content made the noises of Index and everyone else playing seem so far away.

“It’s like a mysterious giant beast attacking a city.”

Tsuchimikado smiled as he explained.

“Even after the guards investigated for at least half a day, they couldn’t find out the real identity of the beast. They just know that they have to stop it to prevent the damage from becoming more widespread. Kami-yan, you’re just restrained by common knowledge and your own perspective. You just need to imagine it as

gaming rules, and it should be rather easy for you to understand it.”

“Your example here made me unable to understand it at all.”

Hearing Tsuchimikado’s words, Kanzaki looked completely perplexed as she tilted her head and said it.

(To think that this woman could do such a cutesy action.) Kamijou thought rather rudely.

“Let’s explain it a little further. This spell called Angel Fall includes the ideas of the Kabbalah. Have you heard of it?”

“...No impression.”

Actually, Kamijou seemed to have heard of it before, but since he didn’t really remember, he denied it. Thinking about it, the magician Stiyl seemed to have said it before during the battle against the alchemist.

“The so-called Tree of Life is basically a hierarchy of identities, separating God, angels, humans and souls into ten levels on a pyramid; this is the basic concept.”

“It’s based on the picture drawn out to show that God reigns supreme over everything. Well, simply put, this picture shows that humans can only reach a certain level, and beyond is God’s territory, so it can’t be invaded.”

“The number of humans and angels were already decided, thus in ordinary circumstances, humans are definitely unable to be promoted to become angels. In contrast, angels are never to be demoted to be humans.”

“Because every single realm is already filled up.”

Following off what Tsuchimikado said, Kanzaki continued, “But this spell called Angel Fall is just as what the name implies, it can force an angel that’s in the heavens to become a human. And the human realm is like a cup full of water, if a drop of angel is to fall in—what will happen to the cup of water?”

“Ah...eh...” Kamijou looked rather awkward as he said, “An...angel...?”

“Yes. Strictly speaking, it’s not heaven’s messenger, but God’s messenger. Are

there any questions?”

Kanzaki answered seriously.

“Hm...”

Kamijou’s mind stopped thinking.

Mikoto and company were having fun playing with the beach ball, and the sounds reached the ears of the completely silent Kamijou. As there were only the few of them on the wide coast, the sounds brought a bit of loneliness.

It was not like Kamijou didn’t understand, but trying to click with those people who were from the magic world with scientific knowledge was impossible. Basically, Kamijou once got involved with a case involving vampires, and nearly lost his life.

The problem is...an angel? Wouldn’t it be too far-fetched?

(If anyone were to hear that ‘the problem that’s happening on Earth now is caused by an angel!’ and yet could respond with ‘this is bad, what should we do?’, it was likely that they had lost all hope on their own lives, right?) Kamijou seriously thought.

“...What angel? This is truly hard to believe. In this age, space shuttles can break through the atmosphere, and there’s no sign of a heaven...”

“Mm, the high and low relationship of heaven and hell isn’t of height.”

“Then what is it?”

“Here’s an example. Human eyes can’t see infrared rays, and human ears can’t detect high frequency sounds. You can understand this right, Kami-yan?”

“Ah? Mn.”

“The high and low refers to this, anything that’s above or below what humans can detect. They can’t feel it if it’s too high or if it’s too low. So even if God is to appear beside Kami-yan, you should be unable to detect it.”

Tsuchimikado delightedly smiled.

“Yeah. The low is referring to hell of the devil. What’s opposite Infrared rays are ultraviolet rays, and low frequency in contrast to high frequency; in other words, an inversion. Though both waves are different, both are still waves. In other words, even if there’s an angel standing beside a demon, they won’t be able to detect each other unless they interfere with each other in the area between heaven and hell called the ‘human realm’.”

“Tsuchimikado...”

Kanzaki’s tone sounded rather stern.

She didn’t seem to like Tsuchimikado using infrared and high frequency as examples.

“But once objects are lit by infrared rays, they will grow hot. Glass will vibrate when there’s a high frequency sound. This is called a Divine Retribution or a miracle. So on first glance, the heaven that doesn’t react will sometimes affect the human realm. Of course, there may be opposite effects.”

Kamijou still didn’t understand.

Tsuchimikado continued, “Oh yes, Kami-yan. In religions that worship idols like Buddhism and Christianity, the power of God or power of angels do actually exist around us.”

“...”

Kamijou looked suspicious.

“I’m not lying to you. Here’s an example. Wouldn’t there be a cross at the top of the roof of a church? These crosses have a special power, but are these crosses the ones used to kill the saints? The answer is obviously no.”

Tsuchimikado continued to wave his hand and said, “The crosses on the top of the churches are all fake, but even a fake can have power. As long as the shape and purpose is similar, it can obtain a small portion of the real one. This is the Idol Theory.”

Basically, adding a metal sword and light magic together will create a light magic blade.

“This Idol Theory rule applies to angels as well. As long as one uses some special skills, the power of an angel can be placed on an item. For example, an angel’s sculpture on the tip of a sword can cause the blade to be infused with Telesma. Carving an angel’s name onto a protective magic array will grant the defensive power of an angel...of course, the amount of power a substitute can get is extremely little. Only in the Old Testament of the Bible did an angel truly descend on the earth.”

“These are to be made under one assumption, that angels exist.”

“...This is really unbelievable.”

Even though Kamijou was still suspicious, he didn’t dare try to act snobbish. Besides, these guys were experts, and they were serious, not joking at all. When he faced off against the alchemist, Kamijou really had a hard time because he didn’t listen to Stiyl’s explanation seriously; thus, he learned his lesson.

“Sorry, I just want to confirm this...is this really not a prank?”

“I don’t understand what you mean.”

Kanzaki coughed a bit, and continued.

“Anyway, Angel Fall is a spell that forcefully pulls an angel down from above, and this will affect the four worlds—in other words, the original world, the world of creation, the formed world and the physical world.”

“...Eh, Tsuchimikado-sensei, may I know what language this Missy is speaking?”

“I’ll explain this. Like what you see, Kami-yan, everyone’s inside and outside have switched. This is like a musical chairs game, once the game starts, the chairs and the people sitting on the chairs will change completely. But in this game, not everyone will get a chair eventually. The only one left without a seat will be squeezed into the sky—to sit on the chair that the angel originally vacated.”

A substitution of roles.

What resulted were the scenes that Kamijou saw at the seaside and on the television.

Kamijou finally understood that part.

Tsuchimikado casually chuckled and said, “However, the theory isn’t important at all. We just need to know that something strange happened and that we have to stop it.”

“...Stop it? Is there a way?”

“Yeah. It seems like this spell called Angel Fall is still incomplete. If we want to stop it, now’s the time. Even if it’s your right hand, it can’t revive someone who’s been burned to ash, right? Same logic, it will be too late if the spell is complete.”

“...”

Your right hand.

Though it may not seem important, but how did Tsuchimikado know about the Imagine Breaker?

Seeing Kamijou look so suspicious, Tsuchimikado paused momentarily, before continuing.

“Oi oi, do I need to explain this as well? The battle for the Index, the invasion of Misawa Cram School, the termination of the Level 6 project, I knew about all these events. I was even the one in charge of investigating for two of those events.”

Tsuchimikado casually said such shocking things before returning back to topic as per normal.

“Though the real spell is a mystery, Angel Fall is a global spell. It’s too much for a magician to try and carry it out, so the culprit should have carried out a ritual center like barrier or magic array.”

Tsuchimikado then said with an enthusiastic tone, “Thus, there are two ways to prevent Angel Fall. One is to beat the caster, and the second is to destroy the ritual center. Of course, there’s a time limit, but we don’t know how much time we have, which makes this thrilling.”

In the end, Kamijou was still confused. Anyway, because of a certain someone, everyone’s inside got switched...that’s what he meant, right?

At this moment, any ordinary person would have shouted ‘isn’t this too ridiculous’? But Kamijou himself was living in a city with 2.3 million espers, and had fought against magicians before. Thus, he knew that there were many things that couldn't be brought through with just a simple ‘this is too illogical’.

Thus, Kamijou started to be bothered.

It seemed like everyone’s actions looked so strange because of the substitution in roles. Kamijou recalled what had happened that morning. It was extremely disastrous ever since he woke up this morning, Misaka Mikoto actually became his little sister—

“—Wait...hold on! This is too weird! Why do I have an extra little sister? I don’t have a little sister at all!”

If all those strange phenomenon were caused by the substitution in roles (though it sounds ridiculous), how did Mikoto become Kamijou’s little sister?

Kanzaki casually continued.

“Well, who knows? But since there’s a substitution in roles, it means that there should be someone that originally exist. Or maybe you really do have a little sister in this world; just that you don’t know of.”

“What? So I found out about my family’s big secret due to this?”

Kamijou was shocked severely, but still managed to make a little joke. Unfortunately, he was not really convinced.

“Speaking of which, what’s the culprit’s intention to blow it up like this?”

“I can guess two reasons. One is to capture the angel who falls to earth as a

slave, the other is to take the original position of the angel.”

“No matter what the reason is, if it succeeds, it’ll be something big within the Kabbalah world. The members of the Golden Dawn should be panicking like crazy now.”

“If it were to be used for malice—an angel’s power can destroy the entire Vatican. This isn’t a joke, the criminal’s aim can’t just be for something casual.”

“Excuse me...” Completely being ignored, Kamijou carefully opened his mouth and said, “Can we get back on topic? What should I do now? What do you guys intend to do to me by coming all the way here?”

“Ah, about this...”

Tsuchimikado’s tone seemed to indicate that this wasn’t important at all.

“We’ve just said it before. According to the results of the investigation, this strange phenomenon seems to be caused by you at the center, Kami-yan. However, you’re unaffected even though you’re at the center...”

“...What?”

Kamijou was stunned and his eyes widened.

“So you’re suspected as the culprit. It’s like a hacker spreading a virus worldwide, the hacker won’t let his own computer be hacked, right?”

“Wait...hold on! If you say so, aren’t you guys still the same?”

“Kanzaki and I were lucky. I said before that Angel Fall started because it spread from you. Kanzaki nee-chin and I just so happened to be in London when the spell was activated.”

“...So this meant that everyone in London is okay?”

“As if. The power of Angel Fall is tremendous. We just so happened to be inside Windsor Castle. Windsor Castle has a stronghold-level defensive barrier, and its defensive capability is definitely not less than the white Walking Church. Besides us, it seems like the people inside the deepest parts of Westminster

Abbey and Southwark Cathedral are alright.”

Tsuchimikado chuckled.

“Under the double protection of the distance and the barrier, we managed to escape. However, most of the magicians got hit by the poison of Angel Fall, there are very few people who realized this.”

“Oh...though I don’t really understand what’s going on, isn’t this a silver lining in the cloud?”

“Not just that. Nee-chin was okay, but I wasn’t inside the deepest part at that time. If I didn’t set up a barrier for myself during the 300 seconds when the outside barrier was activated, even I would be affected.”

“...Eh? But you just said that you can’t use magic...”

Even now, Kamijou was still rather confused about this thing called magic.

However, Kamijou did witness the students of Misawa Cram School who were manipulated by the alchemist use magic, and their bodies exploded due to the rejection. Anyway, espers couldn't use magic.

Tsuchimikado seemed to understand what Kamijou meant, as he smirked slightly and said, “That’s right. This is why there are some parts of me that are absolutely terrible now. I’ll definitely die the next time I use magic.”

A gust blew by, lifting up Tsuchimikado’s flowery shirt.

Kamijou saw that underneath the shirt—there was a large black bloody patch on him. It seemed like his body had gotten corroded by something unknown.

“Even so, I haven’t completely escaped the control of Angel Fall.”

Tsuchimikado chuckled, and continued, “Besides us and you, to others, I’m ‘switched’ now. My current appearance is of an idol superstar named Hitotsui Hajime. A few days ago, this person was exposed by the tabloids to have an affair with another famous female star. Thus, right now, if any of those rabid girls is to see me, they’ll come chasing after me with metal bats. This is truly a unique life experience.”

Tsuchimikado then pointed at his sunglasses and said, “So I have no choice but to disguise myself.”

“Erm...this means that...” Kamijou carefully asked Tsuchimikado, “So you’re that handsome idol to those substituted people?”

“That’s the case.”

Tsuchimikado said casually.

“Aren’t you all too popular now! I’m in a mess here and yet you’re so popular out there!”

“Well, this life is rather tiring as well. Besides, if I want to destroy this Angel Fall, I can’t let myself be dragged down by the crowd.”

“...Well, at least you’re being professional here.”

Kamijou turned to Kanzaki and said, “That onee-san got switched in other people’s eyes as well, right?”

“...”

Kanzaki remained silent, her shoulders trembling slightly.

(Eh? Don’t tell me I tripped on her land mine?) Kamijou wondered.

“...—iyl.”

“What?”

Kamijou was shocked.

Kanzaki then continued in a flat tone, “My appearance right now is that of Stiyl Magnus. That’s right, to them, I’m now one over two meter tall man with long red hair. Once I enter a bathroom or a changing room, someone will call the police, I’ll be mistaken to be a pervert while taking the train. Yes, I was shocked. For a moment, I thought that the whole world was against me.”

Kamijou thought, so a human’s emotions aren’t necessarily expressed in facial expressions or tone. Such a monotone that doesn’t have any emotions in it can

actually be that terrifying.

Kamijou could be certain.

That onee-san really seemed to be angry.

With an emotionless puppet-like expression, Kanzaki forcefully placed her hands onto Kamijou's shoulders.



“Did you really not do anything? You were the culprit, right? To be honest, I won’t be angry. An angel being controlled by a magician, this is one huge event that’s unheard of. Do you know how dangerous that is? I had enough, I should immediately settle this. Do you know how terrible it is to be treated as a big and tall Englishman with a sissy’s voice?”

“Uu...ooooiii! Stop...shaking...stop shaking me!”

Without showing any expression, Kanzaki shook Kamijou’s shoulders back and forth with a terrifying force that exceeded human logic. Kamijou was terrified that his neck would snap.

“Do you understand now? Being at the center of this strange phenomenon, you’ll be viewed by every other magician in the world who escaped this as the culprit; you’ll be hunted by them.”

“STOP WATCHING THE SHOW FROM THE SIDELINES! HURRY...UP AND TELL HER TO STOP SHAKING ME!”

Kamijou shouted, feeling like he was about to throw up.

“U...uuugh...THINK ABOUT IT, YOU GUYS! ANGEL FALL IS A MAGIC SPELL, AND I’M AN ESPER, HOW CAN I CAST MAGIC!?”

The hands of Kanzaki that were shaking Kamijou violently froze instantly.

Without moving, Kanzaki looked into Kamijou’s eyes, and like ice in a cup melting, she frowned slightly, revealing a puzzled expression.

“If so, this means that we’re completely clueless here. We have no idea what the culprit intends to use the angel for, but we have to quickly prevent Angel Fall. Am I going to continue living on as a foreign juggernaut who’s very fluent in Japanese but talks like a lady...?”

Hearing Kanzaki say this, though this incident wasn’t Kamijou’s fault, he did feel a sense of guilt and sadness.

What was that feeling? It was like seeing a neighbor’s perfect nee-chan suddenly crying. It was completely different from the feeling that Index gave of wanting

to protect her.

Originally feeling casual, Tsuchimikado seemed to have that feeling as well. He said, “All right, all right. If so, I guess that we have to start over our investigations again.”

“...Oh yeah...”

Kanzaki looked at Tsuchimikado and said, “Tsuchimikado, you’re an esper as well, but you did use magic before...so it’s likely that...”

Kanzaki’s tone was rather calm, but Kamijou felt goosebumps on his back, and quickly clarified, “Hold...hold on hold on! The problem is that I have no knowledge of magic at all!”

“That’s right, but you do have the Index with you, right?”

“That’s right, that’s a blind spot,” Tsuchimikado said in a casual tone, sounding rather impressed.

And after which, he found Kamijou glaring at him and felt somewhat embarrassed, so he quickly rounded off, “But Kanzaki nee-chin, if espers use magic, it’ll greatly damage their bodies. At the very least, there will be bleeding, and in serious cases, a massive body explosion—it was mentioned in the report of the Misawa incident, right? You can see that Kami-yan’s body is rather healthy here.”

“Mn, then let’s confirm it.”

After saying that, Kanzaki naturally reached her hand out and tapped Kamijou’s stomach lightly.

“WAH! WHAT...WHAT ARE YOU DOING!?”

“Why are you jumping up out of a sudden? I’m just checking to see if there are any wounds. Seeing your overreaction, there are some parts inside that are damaged and can’t be seen by the human eye, right?”

“NO HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT WON’T JUMP AT THIS! THIS IS A NATURAL REACTION, STOP TOUCHING ME LIKE THAT, FOR

GOODNEES SAKE!”

“That’s too suspicious. You’re afraid of being checked, right? If you’re innocent, you won’t be mindful of being checked no matter the means, right?”

Kamijou stared at the shallow beach. If Index and the rest were to see him being molested by a nee-chin, it would be over. He wouldn’t be able to wash his sins away even if he were to jump into a river.

“...(To indicate that anyone who refuses to be checked is the culprit. Kanzaki nee-chin really is one of the radical juries of the Anglican Church's Necessarius.)”

Rather understanding of the workings of the magic world, Tsuchimikado seemed to be rather impressed. Of course, Kamijou wouldn’t know about such things.

“Ugh...all...all right! My innocence can be proven if I don’t have any external wounds or internal bleeding, right...OOOOIII! STOP...DON’T TOUCH ANY STRANGE PLACES!!”

“??? Anyway, please don’t move.”

Kanzaki’s slender fingers moved underneath Kamijou’s armpits, chest and other areas slowly. Though Kanzaki gave an icy impression, her fingers were unexpectedly warm. Facing this predicament, Kamijou started to sweat profusely. The sweat-stained fingers of Kanzaki felt like someone licking Kamijou’s body with their tongue.

(Hold...hold on...! Not good...ooiii!! If...if she continues to touch me like this...I’ll develop some weird interests in the future...!)

“...”

Kanzaki moving fingers suddenly stopped.

She silently looked down.

Kamijou Touma’s beach pants.

That’s right. Since Kamijou Touma was a healthy high school student, there was

a reaction to Kanzaki Kaori's reckless palpation, and the center of that reaction was hidden inside the center of the beach pants.

"Wait...wait a second! Miss Kanzaki! This isn't some! This is an effective factor! It's an irresistible accident! I'm sorry, I'm wrong! It's my fault, please don't serve me up with that Japanese sword!"

Kamijou frantically tried to explain after being stunned for a while. However, Kanzaki didn't seem to be thinking about that.

Like a stone statue, she remained silent for a while, and finally said, "...You're right. If we're to start checking, we have to be thorough, even inside the pants."

"ARE YOU KIDDING ME!? WHO WILL ALLOW THAT...AHHH, YOU'LL VIEW ME AS THE CULPRIT IF I SAY 'NO', RIGHT!? BUT I WON'T AGREE TO IT NO MATTER WHAT! DON'T I HAVE A RIGHT TO PROTEST AS A HEALTHY YOUNG BOY!?"

"Hm."

Kanzaki moved her eyes up from the beach pants.

"Alright, maybe my method isn't working. Since I'm of the opposite gender, it must be painful to be checked here like this."

"That...that's right! Just like this! We can still talk if you calm down!"

"So, being of the same gender, Tsuchimikado, please do the honors."

"Wait...Tsuchimikado? Like that palpation just now? Inside the beach pants? No...NOOOO!! I DON'T WANT IT!!"

"Really? Then I'll do it then."

"Why...WHY IS IT 'IF IT'S NOT A, THEN IT'S B'!? WHY ARE THERE ONLY A AND B AS OPTIONS!? HOLD...HOLD ON! MISS KANZAKI! WHY ARE YOU WEARING SURGICAL GLOVES!? HOLD...HOLD ON! WAIT...AHHHHH—!"

Option C, raising a toy shovel and shouting : "I'll kill you."

Embarrassed and angry, Kamijou's tears were about to come out as he increased his distance from the strange neighbor and the nee-chin with the Japanese nodachi. Using his hands to hold down the beach pants that he barely managed to defend, he stared at those two like a wounded beast.

The two magicians felt rather awkward as well.

"S-see? I was right, right? Kami-yan wasn't switched not because he was the culprit, but because the effects of Angel Fall got negated by the Imagine Breaker."

"Hm, but if so, this is a bit problematic. We have already lost track of our goal. If Angel Fall is complete, it will cause devastation on a mythical scale; but we don't have a single clue..."

"It's not that we don't have a clue at all. At least we know that the Angel Fall started with Kami-yan at the center, so the culprit should be near him!"

"The problem is that we don't know whether the culprit actually interacted with Kamijou Touma."

"That's rather troublesome. My pulse will explode if I use magic again. Ah, that's right, how about we get Kami-yan to help us track this culprit?"

"Your suggestion is rather illogical. Are you going to ask your guests to help you build your house when you don't have enough workers?"

"That's alright, isn't it? We will protect Kami-yan from being attacked by the culprit, and Kami-yan will destroy the location of the Angel Fall spell. We'll still need him though. What do you think, Kami-yan?"

Kamijou didn't answer.

He was silently writing a few words with his fingers: I'm going to sue you.

## **Part 2**

After 8 PM, the real night of summer descended.

Kamijou's family was gathered at the first level of the seaside resort, sitting around the round table. Even though it was Kamijou's family, the roles had switched.

As 'Kamijou's friend', Kanzaki Kaori naturally blended into that crew of strange characters. Of course, to the rest, she was a rough red-haired foreign delinquent.

Kamijou was feeling rather insecure. Since they didn't know when Angel Fall would be complete, how could she be sitting down there so casually? But to Kanzaki, since the phenomenon was centered around Kamijou, it seemed like protecting Kamijou was also one of her priorities.

However, Tsuchimikado hadn't joined in. Right now, he should be playing with sea roaches along the barrier reefs. To the others, he was an idol who just got into trouble; and as a professional spy, Tsuchimikado most likely wouldn't want to get caught up with having to handle people.

So right now, everyone who was sitting around the round table were ordinary civilians (on the surface).

Everyone was hungry, but there was no sign of the shopkeeper.

Turning on the television, they only saw Komoe-sensei reporting the depressing news that the serial killer Hino Jinsaku had escaped from prison, and still had not been found. They were unable to use that as a topic for conversation.

Even though he didn't know what to say, Touya still tried to talk to Kanzaki.

"Hello, I'm Touma's father. I didn't know that Touma has foreign friends; it's really the age of globalisation. Ah, let me give you an Egyptian talisman as a greeting gift. It's a scarab from Egypt. It's said that once you have it, you won't get lost in the desert."

Touya pulled out a grounded pepper-sized bottle, and Kamijou was stunned before he shouted out.

There was a dried dead insect stored inside.

“Isn’t this a dung beetle? Don’t put such a thing on the dinner table, stupid dad!”

“No.”

Kanzaki said calmly.

“In Egypt, the scarab represents transmigration. It is a representative gift of Egyptian culture, like the Eye of Horus and the Ankh (key of life).”

“Erm...yeah...that’s right! Touma, Dad’s not too sure, but you shouldn’t be so quick to deny other countries’ cultures like that.”

“What...am I the only one? Am I the only one who feels that one shouldn’t put a dried dead insect like that onto the dining table?”

Kamijou was hit greatly, but at that moment, Mikoto, who was sitting beside Kamijou, tugged his shirt and said, “...No, I’m on onii-chan’s side. It’s scary to use that kind of thing as a cell phone keychain. It may also tremble when the phone vibrates.”

“I really want to thank you for your honest opinion, but hearing that act-cutesy voice of yours really irritates me.”

“What!?”

Mikoto puffed her cheeks, but Kamijou completely ignored her.

At that moment, Kamijou remembered something.

Kamijou’s family shouldn’t have a little sister. To everyone, who was Mikoto?

Thus, Kamijou moved his position to secretly ask Index, who was taking the role of his mother.

“(Oi oi, let me ask you, who’s that imouto? I’m really curious...)”

“Ara ara, so does Touma like girls who are like that little sister?”

Seeing his that his mother’s brain was short-circuited, Kamijou raised his fist and knocked her head slightly as if he was knocking a faulty television.

“Ara ara, you really don’t take care of a girl’s feelings. That’s Touma’s cousin, Otohime.”

“(…Cousin)?”

“Ara ara, has Touma forgotten about her already? Then you don’t remember uncle and aunt Tatsugami already? You probably never met them ever since you graduated from kindergarten and entered Academy City. However, you did take an afternoon nap together with Otohime in the same bed.”

“But…but no one was here yesterday?”

“She just came in this morning.”

As they talked, footsteps could be heard from the entrance leading to the seaside. The owner was back.

“Sorry sorry, I didn’t have time to say hello to you people. The loudspeaker on the seaside was broken, and it took a while to repair it.”

The one closest to the owner, Kanzaki, turned around and said, “Please don’t mind, the loudspeaker can be used to report any incoming tsunami and assist in relief work, it’s most important to handle this since it involves human safety… Sti…Stiyl? What’s going on?”

“Stiyl? Is that a common slang?”

The tall and huge man with long red hair said suspiciously.

“You’re about to eat dinner, already, right? There’s not much variety here, but the advantage here is that we’re fast!”

“No…erm...(I was too careless…I forgot that Stiyl’s here in Japan to hunt people down!)”

It seemed like Stiyl was completely controlled by Angel Fall. Thinking of which, all the magicians in the world should be the same now, and besides, there were very few magicians who detected that anomaly, like Tsuchimikado and Kanzaki.

Kanzaki muttered to herself, but the surrounding people didn’t seem to notice it.

Everyone was focused on choosing their main course from the few options of ramen, fried soba noodles and curry.

After the tall and huge boss took everyone's order, he took huge steps into the shop.

At that moment, Index placed her hand on her face as she stared at Kanzaki, and said, "Ara ara, your Japanese is really fluent. Aunty's really impressed."

"Eh?"

Kanzaki shoulders trembled slightly.

"Ah...it's...it's nothing, thanks for your compliments."

Though Kanzaki and Index were both members of the Anglican Church, for some reason, both of them were estranged from each other. Being talked to suddenly, Kanzaki was rather troubled.

Of course, the rest (including Kamijou, who had lost his memory) didn't know about that.

"Ara ara, humble and polite. Seeing you being so burly, aunty thought that you'll be a pretty rough person."

Being only slightly taller than an average Japanese, Kanzaki's shoulders trembled slightly.

However, the people surrounding her didn't seem to realize it.

Mikoto then said, "However, your choice of words is rather weird, it feels a bit feminine. You're so burly, it should be better for you to use a more masculine way of speaking. Also, your movements feel a bit like a girl."

Having trained more than an ordinary woman, Kanzaki's facial muscles trembled slightly.

She muttered slightly, "Only...only a little?"

At that moment, Kamijou sensed that something was wrong, but Touya added

on, “Alright, alright, don’t say it. Isn’t language all about being able to convey the correct meaning? I believe he would say this should be because the one who first taught him Japanese was a woman. Also, it’s not important whether he’s burly or not, right?”

Kanzaki’s entire body was already trembling slightly.

Kamijou tried to use his body language to tell Kanzaki,

(Kanzaki! Kanzaki! Everyone’s not talking about you! They’re just treating you as Stiyl Magnus! They’re definitely not telling you that you’re tall and burly, no matter what, you’re a brave and stout man—!)

The next second, Kanzaki slowly stood up.

Kamijou didn’t recognize that it was his words that were the most hurting.

Kanzaki grabbed Kamijou’s collar and said slightly, “...(I see, so that’s what you think?)”

After saying it, she dragged Kamijou away from the round table.

“(Hold...hold on! Where are you pulling me to? Are you going to execute me? Ah...it should be the bathroom over there...don’t tell me...I heard of an interrogation method that’s popular in American jails, that’s to splash cold water on the criminals and make them lose heat..!)”

Kanzaki didn’t reply.

Like a corpse, Kamijou was dragged further away.

### **Part 3**

Kanzaki didn’t drag Kamijou to some strange place, just into the interior of the shop.

It seemed that Kanzaki didn't have a specific destination in mind. Arriving at a place with no one around, she told Kamijou off before turning her eyes to the sliding shoji doors.

“Oh yeah, this resort has a bathhouse. It's hard for me to say it, but with all these going on nowadays, I didn't have time to bathe.”

That was right, a seaside resort had a bathhouse. It was like building a simple toilet on the seaside, the purpose was to allow the visitors to wash away the seawater on their skin.

Kamijou turned back to look at the corridor he had passed through, and said, “However...do you really have time to bathe? If Angel Fall's completed, wouldn't it be too late?”

“You're right...”

Kanzaki hesitated for a while, and then continued.

“...I know I shouldn't have any personal feelings, but I'm really not used to seeing that child smile at me. I don't have that right at all.”

Kanzaki said bitterly.

She seemed to be running away from something.

“...”

Kamijou remained silent. At the time when he attacked the Misawa Cram School, Stiyl had said that same thing with the same expression when he was talking about Index.

That should be a wound that must not be opened again.

Thus, Kamijou decided not to pursue further.

“Ah...anyway, why did you drag me all the way here to the bathhouse? Are you going to discuss tactics with me?”

“...”

Kanzaki shook her head slightly.

“No, I have a simple request; I just need you to keep watch over here. This bathhouse should be public like an onsen or a public bathhouse, right?”

Kamijou remained silent.

Of course, in this little seaside resort, the bathhouse wouldn't be sorted into men and ladies. There was only one bathhouse, and when a man entered, it would be a man's bathhouse; when a woman entered, it would become a ladies' bathhouse.

To everyone, Kanzaki was now Stiyl Magnus, so even when they saw Kanzaki's figure through the shoji doors, the other men may think “Ah, it's a man bathing!” and would rush in, especially that resort boss.

“...Are you thinking that this may be interesting?”

“You're thinking too much! I don't want to risk my life with someone who's wielding a nodachi!”

Kanzaki stared suspiciously at Kamijou before saying “Then I'll leave it to you”. She then walked into the bathhouse, shut the shoji door and took off her clothes.

One could see Kanzaki's silhouette through the shoji door, and because it was impossible to see clearly, it would make anyone excited. Kamijou frantically shook his head to control his desire and turned his back around, gently sighing.

“Hi! Kami-yan! What are you doing here?”

Tsuchimikado suddenly walked in pompously from the other side. Since the blue sunglasses on his face were a disguise, he couldn't take them off even though it was nighttime.

“Oi, aren't others seeing you as some bastard idol who created quite the news recently?”

“Relax, it's alright that nobody saw me. This is how Tsuchimikado does things.”

Tsuchimikado said casually.

To Kamijou, that guy's attitude wasn't any different from usual.

"...Sorry, Kami-yan."

"Sorry about what?"

Kamijou asked, only to see Tsuchimikado looking extremely serious.

"Actually, those dangers that Kami-yan went through, I knew all about them. The attack on the alchemist's fortress, the slaughter of twenty thousand clones and so on...I knew all about them, yet I didn't help you out, so I'd like to apologize to you."

"..."

"Besides, being powerless to help is completely different from being unable to help. I'm really sorry."

"Don't mind these small matters."

Tsuchimikado revealed a tired look, but Kamijou was rather casual in his response.

Tsuchimikado was rather surprised regarding Kamijou's attitude, but Kamijou didn't say anything more, because he felt that there was no need to explain further.

No matter what, Tsuchimikado was still Tsuchimikado, that fact wouldn't change at all. To Kamijou, Tsuchimikado was still his dorm neighbor and classmate.

"Hm."

Tsuchimikado chuckled.

"Alright, enough nonsense. We'll end the depressing stuff here. Let's get down to business!"

"Business?"

"That's right! It's the most exciting summer festival activity! The peeping on Kanzaki nee-chin's naked body contest!"

“What? Are you serious?”

“...Looky look, Kami-yan! The cell phones nowadays have camera functions!”

“Are you even listening to me? I can’t just joke around with that Bakumatsu swordswoman! Once she finds out, I’ll be slashed in half by that whatsoever family secret move!”

“...But on the other hand, you’ll peep if there’s no danger, right?”

“...”

“...Kanzaki nee-chin will definitely look great when she takes off her clothes!”

(Great!?) Kamijou inadvertently lost his breath.

He shook his head frantically, and said, “Bu...but...is this alright? Aren’t you Kanzaki’s comrade? You shouldn’t betray her, right?”

Kamijou tried his best to stop Tsuchimikado, only to see Tsuchimikado’s blue sunglasses flash.

“Ha! You’re too naïve! I’m the spy of the Anglican Church’s Necessarius, Tsuchimikado Motoharu! Known as the backstabber! The resident of the liar village is yours truly!”

“Wah! I don’t want to suffer together with this sort of person!”

Kamijou continued to protest, and Tsuchimikado said impatiently, “Cheh, such a boring guy. Kanzaki nee-chin nearly wanted to take your life, so it’s no wonder that you’re afraid of her. However, she’s not really that scary! Kanzaki nee-chin’s really cute!”

“C-cute...?”

“Yeah. You know, I came to Academy City after I finished middle school, and before that, I was in London all the time. At that time, I was one of the few who spoke both English and Japanese at the same time, and Kanzaki nee-chin, who just joined the Anglican Church at that time, understood only Japanese at that time. It was really interesting to see her so nervous and mime when she was

questioned by the English!”

Tsuchimikado knocked on the wall slightly.

“At that time, I was the only Japanese person in Necessarius, so once she got an English letter, nee-chin would often look to me for help with a puzzled look on her face, she was so attractive at that time!”

“...Really unbelievable, to think that you could be relied on in some instances.”

“Forget about that, let’s peep! Cute nee-chin!”

“And you’re holding a camera phone, aren’t you a little too much?”

“Kami-yan, you should be more honest with your lust!”

“And why are you so enthusiastic? You should be tackling those girls who’re younger than you, right? Aren’t you called the siscon-sergeant?”

“Oi, stop using that nickname! Do you have any proof!?”

“No normal person would really love a little sister who’s not blood related, right?”

“WAH! Who...who LOVED the little sister! Who told you that!?”

“Even if the law doesn’t forbid it, you can’t just do anything you want, right?”

“Do...do...do anything? What do you mean by that?”

“Eh? Why are you so nervous? Hold on, Tsuchimikado...don’t tell me you really have feelings for your little sister...”

“STOP IT! STOP TRAPPING ME WITH THESE WORDS! ONE MORE WORD, AND I’LL KILL YOU!!”

Tsuchimikado forcefully clinched Kamijou’s neck, intending to make him shut up. At that moment, the floor let out a light cracking sound, and Tsuchimikado hastily retreated through the shadows like a ninja, disappearing without a trace.

(Ah, if we were to be seen just now, it’ll make the headlines— ‘Idol grabbed a

boy's collar'.)

Kamijou casually thought as he turned towards where the footsteps came from.

“Hi! Onii-chan, what are you doing here?”

It was Index and Mikoto.

No, they were his mom and cousin, it was just that they assumed Index and Mikoto's appearance.

“Eh? You finished eating already?”

“Ara ara, it's not that, Touma. It'll take a while before dinner's done, so we're here to bathe.”

At this moment, Mikoto turned to look at the shoji screen.

“...Onii-chan, is anyone inside?”

“Ah, ya...that's why I'm standing guard here.”

“Stand guard? What do you mean by that? Isn't it onii-chan's friend inside? You two can bathe together!”

“Eh?”

Mikoto's words confused Kamijou.

About five seconds later, he finally realized what she had meant.

That's right. To them, Kanzaki was now Stiyl Magnus.

“Hold...hold on a minute! I never said that I wanted to bathe! Besides, does the law say that friends have to bathe with each other? I can go in when he comes out—!”

“If we have to wait for two rounds, the dinner will soon come and go cold! Since you two are both guys, there's no problem! Hurry up and go bathe!”

“WAHH! Hold...hold on...really—AAAHHHH!!”

“Alright, alright, hurry up and go in!”

Without any hesitance, both of them slid the door open and mercilessly tossed Kamijou Touma into the changing room.

Inside.

Right in front of Kamijou’s eyes.

An indescribable Kanzaki was standing there.

If she was someone who took quite some time to bathe, maybe there wouldn’t have been a tragedy when Kamijou got thrown into the changing room, since there was a door separating the bathroom and the changing room.

Just at that moment, Kanzaki walked out of the bathroom, completely naked as she reached back with both hands to tie her wet hair while holding a ribbon in her mouth. Maintaining that position, she looked like she was frozen.

PA! At that moment, the door slammed shut behind Kamijou.

“.....”

“.....”



The silence in the sealed room exerted a heavy pressure. If Kanzaki were to cry or go into a rage, Kamijou would have known what was to come next, but she didn't show any expression at all, not even attempting to hide. She just reached out for the thin black nodachi that was leaning on the corner of the wall.

Kanzaki's eyes looked as shiny as obsidian; they were trying to say something.

(Any last words?)

“Is—”

Even if he made an apology or an excuse, he would die either way. Now all confused, Kamijou let out these words, “—Is this a new-style katana comedy action film?”

The next second, the black nodachi swung without hesitation.

## Part 4

It was 10 PM.

Kanzaki was standing on the balcony on the second level of the resort. The night at the seaside was like the night in a desert, as the beach didn't retain heat very well.

Tsuchimikado climbed up the pillar on the balcony. To others, he was a star who was exposed in a scandal, so he couldn't appear normally.

Tsuchimikado was currently staring at Kanzaki, who was letting the night wind stroke her.

“What's up? Your face sure is red. Are you still thinking about what happened just now?”

“...Do you think I would?”

“Sigh...actually, you want to, right? There’s a thrill on being seen—I...I was joking! Kanzaki nee-chin, as a swordswoman, can your temper not be that violent?”

“I understand.”

Kanzaki answered impatiently.

Then, she sighed gently.

“However, it seems that the boy really has nothing to do with Angel Fall. If he’s really a magician, his personality wouldn’t be so naïve.”

“He has no reason to do this. But if we’re to think like that, the people around Kami-yan are like him. These people wouldn’t even know what to do with an angel even if they captured one.”

Those words weren’t implying that they looked down on Kamijou, but that it was a different problem. Even if they got (what was said to be) the incredible power of an angel, it would be useless if they didn’t have any knowledge of magic. Though Japan’s household appliances were brilliant, they were useless if they were taken overseas only for the plugs to be different. Thus, it wasn’t a discussion of superiority.

But if so, there were no other suspicious people.

Nobody knew what they should do.

Both of them couldn’t find the crux in their thoughts at all, and they could only focus on other stuff.

“Speaking of which, is it alright to put that child in Kamijou Touma’s hands? It’s been less than a day...no, just half a day, and that happened. To make the mistake of entering a ladies’ bathroom, that’s not something that even a third grader would do. Maybe he and that child had something...even worse...”

“Hm...however, Kami-yan should be able to control himself, right? He’s not the type who’ll attack when girls are sleeping.” Tsuchimikado folded his arms in front of his chest and said, “And he’s not an expert, you understand? He’s not an expert. He’s not like us who can get rid of the guilt of killing by a lofty reason.

He won't push his own sin to anyone else; he'll always move forward with the guilt. Don't you think that's enough reason to be confident in him?"

"...Well..."

"Besides, Kami-yan was the savior of Index, and we couldn't even thank him enough. How can we pick on his shortcomings?"

"I know, I understand what you're saying."

That's right, when Index was at the brink of death, the one who saved her was Kamijou Touma.

Not Kanzaki Kaori, not Stiyl Magnus, but Kamijou Touma.

Normally, she should be thanking him. No, using such a term would be too light. She should repay him with all she had. Even the crane and the tortoise knew how to do that.

"...But I really can't find a chance to do that."

In truth, ever since what happened during the Index incident, Kanzaki was too busy with her job. Because of that and the circumstances, she never once thanked Kamijou, which made her feel guilty.

"In the end, he actually did such a stupid thing, and it's really awkward for me to thank him now..."

"Aiya, Kanzaki nee-chin, he just saw you naked, is that enough reason for you not to thank him now?"

"Uu..."

Kanzaki was speechless.

"Aiyaya, so Kanzaki nee-chin's level of repayment is just this?"

"Uuu..."

Kanzaki gritted her teeth as she stared at Tsuchimikado.

At that moment, Kamijou Touma was standing alone at the first level of the Wadatsumi resort as he pondered about something.

Though the lights were on, there was nobody else around. The girls could be heard laughing, maybe Index and the rest were playing poker cards or something.

The TV was on and airing the nightly news. The nightly news wasn't any different from the afternoon news, but had some unnecessary descriptions to buffer the load.

“Dear viewers—the criminal Hino Jinsaku who had escaped from the Shinfuchuu prison is still at large. Hino's modus operandi is rather unique. He's called a 'ritual killer', and so there are a lot of people who worship him and even imitate him. This time, the police think that these people may be helping him...”

Through the image displayed on the screen, Kamijou blankly watched Komoe-sensei report the news.

“...Besides that, Hino Jinsaku had a history of being a psychiatric patient in a hospital, and admitted before the trial that he has a split personality, so whether he should be responsible for the murders is still up for debate...”

Hino Jinsaku.

To Kamijou, who had lost his memory, he had no impression on that killer before he was apprehended. However, whenever there was a serious case of homicide, his name would always be mentioned, and even now, there would occasionally be a photo of him on TV programs or weekly magazines. It was known that he was responsible for many infamous murder cases.

It wasn't good for the mood to continue watching such news, so Kamijou continued to switch the channel to a variety program that was introducing a diet food that allowed people to slim down fast. While watching the news, Kamijou continued to think of what he saw on the news.

(Split personality...that's right, the summer remedial did mention about espers with split personality...)

Kamijou casually watched the TV as he thought. In this so-called split

personality, the line between personality A and personality B wasn't always clear. In some cases, there could be instances of both personalities appearing at the same time, like for example, the left and right hands were respectively commanded by different personalities, or when personality A was thinking, personality B was moving the hands.

—The above knowledge was what Kamijou had learned from the summer remedial a week ago. Komoe-sensei had said that there was a lot of data regarding those with split personalities, because there was a time where it was popular to research on people with split personalities to see whether they could have two different abilities.

“...Ugh...”

Remembering the content of the lessons, Kamijou, who hated studying, lazily laid his head onto the table.

A lot of things had happened today, and Kamijou's mind started to make some adjustments.

A spell called Angel Fall was activated.

It was said that this spell was aimed at controlling an angel with a strong power.

And the side effect was that everyone's personality and appearance got switched.

The effect lasted throughout everywhere in the world.

Angel Fall wasn't complete, so they had to destroy it now.

Once Angel Fall was complete, it would be all over.

If they wanted to destroy Angel Fall, they had to beat the caster or destroy the place of ritual.

Kamijou Touma was located at the center of that phenomenon, so he was seen as the caster.

A few magicians who noticed the phenomenon may come to assassinate Kamijou.

So Kamijou had to find the real culprit before Angel Fall was complete and either beat the caster or destroy the place of ritual.

“...Hm...”

Lonely, Kamijou lay on the table and pondered.

For a person who was about to be assassinated, such an action was way too defenseless.

(There's no tension at all...)

That was right, this time, Kamijou wasn't sneaking into a killer's building like the Misawa Cram School, nor would he be slowed down and let twenty thousand people get killed. Though the world was in a dire situation, to Kamijou, he was feeling that this was somewhat comical and unreal.

(And I have two experts from the magic world this time.)

Though to Kamijou, Tsuchimikado was still just a 'neighbor'. Since those two (seemed to be) experts in this, Kamijou felt somewhat safe now that they were with him.

Actually, Kamijou didn't notice that he was using the reason of being an amateur to push the responsibility to Kanzaki and Tsuchimikado, the experts. Besides, Kamijou was just an ordinary high school student.

—‘The owner of the stare’ was now staring at the completely defenseless boy.

And this ‘owner of the stare’ was hiding underneath the Wadatsumi resort. The resort had a seventy centimeter tall space below the floor to prevent sand and moisture from entering. In terms of structure, it was like the platform of a shrine.

'The owner of the stare' was staring at the boy from through the wooden planks.

"...Angel-sama, Angel-sama."

The frail and skinny middle-aged man had a shrill voice like an elementary school student before the voice breaks. The voice echoed throughout the darkness, bringing a sense of madness.

"...Angel-sama, Angel-sama, please listen to me!"

One could slightly hear the sound of something like nails scratching wildly on the floor.

In truth, 'the owner of the stare' had nowhere to go. He didn't come to that place willingly. He wanted to find his comrades, but the police's movements were faster than what he had expected, causing him to be trapped there.

"Angel-sama, please listen to me, Angel-sama!"

However, the 'owner of the stare' didn't have the fearful and anxious look of a fugitive.

His right hand was holding onto a uniquely shaped knife, and his left hand was holding a thoroughly scarred wooden board the size of a notebook.

Krekrekre...the sharp edge of the blade continued to scratch the wooden board. The 'owner of the stare' spoke with a glare.

"Angel-sama, how can I escape the police pursuit and find my other friends?"

Krekrekre...as if responding to his own question, the right hand moved on its own, with a will that was completely unrelated to the 'owner of the stare'. The 'owner of the stare' continued to stare at the sharp edge of the blade. The scars on the wooden board were all carvings made by the knife. These were the instructions of the Angel-sama.

"Angel-sama, do you mean that you'll help me if I again offer sacrifices?"

Krekrekre...the 'owner of the stare' would always follow the directions given by the words. The Angel-sama was always right. As long as he followed the directions the Angel-sama, he wouldn't be wrong. But sometimes, the Angel-sama would give requests that were somewhat uncomfortable. Under the orders of the Angel-sama, the 'owner of the stare' had already killed 28 people.

"Angel-sama, Angel-sama. How about I choose this boy as a sacrifice?"

Krekrekre...the knife carved three letters on the wooden board. *YES*. The 'owner of the stare's' expression darkened. He was going to kill again. How irritating.

He hated it, he really didn't want to kill. But I have to do it. This is the Angel-sama's orders, it's not my fault.

"Angel-sama, I'll believe you again."

The 'owner of the stare' said that as it licked its thick and short tongue on the uniquely shaped knife.

This 'owner of the stare' was the death convict, Hino Jinsaku. He used the knife to cut an extremely thick electric cable.

In a moment, all the lights went out.

"No electricity?"

Kamijou frowned in the darkness. As the entrance to the resort was open, the moonlight shined in from outside, so it wasn't completely dark.

The moment the power went out, people would unconsciously turn to the electric appliances that lost electricity. While Kamijou casually turned to look at the ceiling lamp that had suddenly turned dark—

zzz...

There was a light cutting sound coming from the wooden floor below Kamijou's feet.

Feeling suspicious, Kamijou stood up and looked down at the floor around his feet.

At that moment...

PA! A crescent shaped blade pierced through the floor below his feet.

"...!"

Kamijou felt his throat becoming parched all of a sudden. Just two seconds ago, if Kamijou's consciousness hadn't been attracted by the darkened light, and if he hadn't stood up, he would have been...thinking about this, uncomfortable sweat oozed out every single inch of Kamijou's body.

A short knife blade.

This crescent-shaped thirty-centimeter-long blade was sharp on the inside, and not on the outside. Thus, instead of calling it a dagger, it was more like a sickle or a claw.

Krekrekre, the blade swayed back and forth before gradually sinking into the floor.

He had to get out of there. However, Kamijou couldn't move. His mind was blank, as if there was a mysterious drug in his blood. His heart was about to burst due to the sudden pumping. Kamijou barely glimpsed, the hole in the floor that was left behind by the blade.

Kamijou seemed to see something.

Looking through the hole on the floor and into the darkness, Kamijou saw something bloodshot, like a marsh, something that looked like it was peeking through a keyhole...

A crazy looking eyeball.

"Ee..."

Kamijou inadvertently let out a terrified sound as he took one step backwards. Immediately, the blade that chased Kamijou pierced out near Kamijou's sole. Kamijou lost his balance and tumbled onto the floor. The blade again sunk as it prepared to make another strike.

(Calm down! Calm down!)

Kamijou muttered what sounded like a curse, but that caused his body to freeze up more. With his mind almost completely frozen, Kamijou started to think hard. He definitely mustn't fall onto the floor. That would be too dangerous. Since the enemy was attacking from below the floor, he just needed to jump onto the table. Just as Kamijou thought about that, as he intended to climb up—

PA!

The entire floor split open and a hand reached out from the floor to grab

Kamijou's foot.

"UWA...AAAHHHHH!!!"

The sudden shock caused Kamijou's heart to nearly pop out of his mouth.

Kamijou tried to drag his foot away, but he couldn't get rid of the hand that was holding onto it. That wasn't because the hand was particularly forceful, but because Kamijou's foot seemed numb and didn't follow his commands at all.

(Calm down! Don't panic! Don't be scared! I don't know who the enemy is, but it's definitely not a monster I never saw before! Piercing a knife through the floor and punching through the floor with a fist, these are things that humans can do! So if I calm down...)

Thinking about that, Kamijou's eyes suddenly saw something.

The hand that was holding onto his ankle.

Some fingernails were cracked, some were torn out; some were stained with blackish-red blocks. The fingers were bluish-black, and there was a large scar on the back of the hand. The blood spots continued to peel, and the disgusting black pieces of meat flipped out from the wounds.

It looked like a rotten fruit that was excreting some transparent fluid.

Like a corpse's hand that got infected by some mysterious killer virus.

"Ah...ah...ugh..."

Kamijou's breathing started to hasten, and his heart started to beat irregularly.

Every single thing his attacker did wasn't something that a human couldn't do. It was nothing compared to Accelerator or the alchemist. From a passer-by's view, the person may wonder why Kamijou was breathing so hard and his pulse remained extremely messed up.

However, there was an easy to understand reason.

For example, if there was a live cockroach in a plastic bag; even if one knew that

there was a plastic bag, they wouldn't dare touch the cockroach directly, let alone bite it to death.

It was the same logic.

Thus, even though logic told us that it was nothing, the fear and trembling wouldn't stop.

That attacker specialized in using psychological fear and irritation to cause the prey to be immobile.

"Ah...ahh...ugh...UGH...!"

Kamijou continued to tug at his leg, trying to shake off the hand that was grabbing onto his ankle. However, his body felt like it got hit with anesthetic. Kamijou couldn't get rid of the black-colored fear rooted deep within his heart.

Kamijou tumbled onto the floor as a foot of his was grabbed. The sound of wood being cut by a blade could be heard near his chest.

On the other hand.

The owner of another stare was lying in ambush 150 meters away on the dim beach, looking at what was going on in the Wadatsumi resort.

It was a red nun.

She was about thirteen years old, with wavy blond hair. Her white skin seemed to reflect the bright moonlight. Though the girl looked cute, her attire was rather weird. She was only wearing a shirt underneath her haori. Actually, the shirt wasn't any different from formfitting underwear, as it revealed the girl's pretty figure fully. Also, the girl was bound by black straps and metal braces, and they seemed to form a bondage outfit. There was an extremely thick ring around her neck, with a rein around it. The leather strap on her waist was full of tools like pincers, hammers, an L-shaped crowbar, and saws.

Those tools weren't used for carpentry, they were witch tribunal tools that specialized in cutting flesh, scraping bones and breaking bodies. Looking closer,

these tools were slightly modified to be different from ordinary carpentry tools.

The girl with interrogation tools all over her remained expressionless.

She lowered her head. Her hair covered most of her face, only revealing her small lips showing a slight sigh.

The girl was listening closely.

There seemed to be quite a few people on the second floor of the Wadatsumi resort. They seemed to feel that something was not right, but it would take them about six seconds to get down to the first floor.

Six seconds. The blade of the attacker from below the floor would have pierced through the victim's heart.

The girl, her expression hidden behind her hair, again sighed.

She then got up.

Without any preparatory moves, the girl's little body quickly moved forward, reducing the distance of 150 meters to 0; the time taken was far less than six seconds.

Fifty meters per second.

It was about as fast as a crossbow. No, maybe even faster.

At that moment...

The red nun entered Kamijou's vision at an alarming rate.

As it was too fast, Kamijou didn't even realize that it was a girl.

The red girl lowered her body, almost sticking onto the ground as she continued to run. She drew the L-shaped crowbar and aimed at the hand that was grabbing onto Kamijou's foot and swung hard at it like a baseball bat.

The bone, and the entire wrist got fractured.

"Uo...ah...GYAAHHH!!"

A cry of agony could be heard from below the floor. The hand that was grabbing onto Kamijou's ankle snuck down and escaped. From the sound of a body rubbing against the floor, the attacker seemed like he was trying to get some distance.

"..."

The red nun threw the crowbar away and pulled out the hammer. She then raised the hammer and slammed it hard onto the floor, forming a seventy centimeter wide hole.



Her blond hair fluttered about as the girl threw the hammer away and pulled out a pincer as she jumped into the hole.

After a second of silence...

BAM! A terrifying sound could be heard from underneath the floor. Something seemed to have been knocked hard, and it was followed by a sound like a beast trying to break out of a sturdy cage.

Kamijou could roughly hear the battle going on below.

BOOM! A hole suddenly opened on the floor five meters in front of him. A black figure leaps out of the floor like a dolphin.

That black figure wasn't that of the red nun.

A skinny and bony middle-aged man tumbled around on the floor and hurriedly stood up.

His skin color was extremely unhealthy looking; it was obvious at first glance that his insides were damaged. The rice-colored workclothes were stained with sweat, dirt, blood and fats. His right hand was holding onto a sickle that looked like a metal claw; and his left wrist was fractured, with bluish-black clotting underneath it. A red liquid flowed down his lips, and an incisor and canine of his were already forcefully pulled out.

"Guu—AAHHHHHH!!"

The middle-aged man was like a wounded beast and he raised the curved knife to hack at Kamijou.

(Ugh...!)

Kamijou reflexively looked around for a weapon that could be used to block the curved knife. He frantically reached into his pockets and searched around, and his fingers felt something hard. Pulling it out to look, it was just a cell phone. This thing couldn't possibly block a knife, Kamijou cursed. Suddenly, he thought of something. He flicked the foldable phone open and shined the screen at the face of that person who was attacking.

PA! The strong light instantly lit up the surrounding darkness.

"GYAAHHH!!"

Having lost his sight, the middle-aged man stopped what he was doing. Kamijou tried to escape, but his feet weren't listening. He could only roll on the floor and get the distance from the attacker.

The middle-aged man raised the curved knife, yet he didn't come pursuing.

His body wavered about, muttering in his mouth.

"Angel-sama...Angel-sama..."

On the workclothes, near the chest, there seemed to be something reflecting the moonlight.

Looking closely, it was a nametag.

"ANGEL-SAMA! ANGEL-SAMA! ANGEL-SAMA!!"

On the plastic nametag that was sewn onto the clothes, there were a few words on it.

Prisoner number 710687 Hino Jinsaku.

"Angel-sama, what's going on? Angel-sama, I followed your orders, why did I get this outcome!? Angel-sama, I gave up 28 lives for you!!"

The man in prisoner clothes let out a confused, maniacal cry of despair.

At that moment, Kamijou suddenly remembered the news content he saw on the TV the entire day.

*"—Dear viewers, I'm the live reporter Komori. The death row convict that escaped from the Shinfuchuu Prison at midnight this morning is still not found. The nearby middle schools have suspended all club activities. Right now, the atmosphere is very tense..."*

(However...)

Kamijou saw this psychotic person that was shouting and rambling about. That person was definitely the criminal. It was not hard to tell from his clothes that he was the Hino Jinsaku that had escaped from jail.

However, why didn't Hino Jinsaku switch his appearance with others?

—Under the effects of Angel Fall, wouldn't everyone's appearance be switched?

And who was that 'Angel-sama' that Hino Jinsaku was shouting about?

—What was the final goal of the Angel Fall spell?

(Don't tell me...this guy...)

Kamijou wanted to open his mouth and ask, but at that moment, Hino Jinsaku suddenly raised the knife.

"ANSWER ME, ANGEL-SAMA! WHAT SHOULD I DO? WHAT SHOULD I DO NEXT? ANGEL-SAMA! YOU HAVE TO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY, TELL ME THE TRUTH!!"

The knife landed.

But not at Kamijou. Hino swung the knife at his own body. The blade violently moved about, creating a sound of things being ripped apart. The workclothes were torn by this blade that was swaying about, and the shirt was stained in sweat got shredded as well, instantly becoming red.

The large number of wounds seemed erratic, but they lined up in words like a child using a knife to carve a table wildly.

*GO ESCAPE*

There was no other way to express it, just a line of letters. However, on seeing that 'instruction', Hino Jinsaku's bloody face showed a smile of despair.

Then, the floor between Kamijou and Hino was shattered. The red nun jumped up, holding a pincer that had something white between it; it looked like a human incisor. The red nun gripped the pincer forcefully, causing the white thing to shatter.

On seeing the red nun, Hino Jinsaku, who lost an incisor unnaturally was terrified as he backed away. He then pulled a wet cloth out as he wiped the blood stains of the curved knife, before throwing it at the girl.

The red nun swayed her head slightly, easily dodging the curved knife.

Having lost its target, the knife flew at Kamijou's face.

"Eh?"

After letting out a puzzled sound, Kamijou suddenly realized how foolish he was. At that moment, the knife was still approaching Kamijou quickly, and the speed could be compared to a hammer swinging down on a nail.

"WAHH!"

Kamijou frantically rolled away and dodged it, but the knife still grazed his face.

Just a light cut.

But at that moment, Kamijou lost his balance. He collapsed onto the ground, unable to get up. He was sweating profusely, and felt like vomiting.

(Poi...son? Damn it...what did he apply on that...?)

The action of rubbing the knife with the cloth was to apply poison.

It was said that among some minority tribes in Africa, they would apply poisonous caterpillar fluids on the tips of the spears before hunting. Maybe this was a similar poison. Kamijou's body had developed a rather decent resistance due to Academy City's training, but he couldn't prevent the power of the poison from taking effect.

Kamijou's vision became blurry, and then darker.

With an unbelievable laughter, Kamijou felt that Hino Jinsaku had already escaped the seaside resort.

The red nun wanted to give chase, but after hesitating, she decided to dash towards Kamijou.

At that moment, Kamijou lost consciousness.

## Part 5

He didn't know whether it was a minute or an hour.

Like a patient with fever, he woke up due to thirst. Behind him was the solid floor, and as he looked around, there was the vestiges of wreckage all around.

It seemed like Kamijou hadn't been taken someplace else. This place seemed to be the first level of the Wadatsumi resort. Most probably, he had been out for only a short while.

Tsuchimikado and Kanzaki were kneeling beside him.

After such a large commotion, Mikoto and Index still hadn't come downstairs. Normally, they would have woken up even if they were asleep. In other words, that meant that Kanzaki or someone else used something similar to the Opila rune that Stiyl had used, Kamijou pondered.

Then, Kamijou noticed Misaka Imouto wearing a T-shirt, shorts and apron among the magicians. She was trembling as she looked around to see the damage to the shop.

Right now, her identity should be that of a shop attendant there.

"I set up an 'empty area' spell, but the shop workers are unexpectedly sleeping at the first level. Good thing that the boss is settling some stuff on the second floor."

Hearing Kanzaki say that, Misaka Imouto trembled.

Her expression was like someone who just witnessed a crime syndicate committing a crime, looking extremely terrified as she didn't know how she would be 'dealt with'.

Kanzaki stroked the nodachi's blade as she said, "For your own safety, let me warn you. You must not talk about what happened today. If you think that this nodachi is a fake, you can just ignore it."

Kanzaki sounded really scary, but Kamijou noticed that Tsuchimikado, who was beside him, was about to burst into laughter...so she wasn't serious?

Then, Kamijou noticed that slightly far away in the shadows was a red nun.

(Who is that?)

Kamijou felt puzzled. Thinking back, she did save him, but who is she?

"Ah, she's not an enemy." Kanzaki noticed Kamijou's gaze as she said, "She's a member of Annihilatus."

Kanzaki's words had some strange language mixed in it, and Kamijou didn't understand.

Tsuchimikado seemed to understand his worries and said, "If the Anglican Church can be said to specialize in hunting witches, then the Russian Orthodox Church specializes in hunting ghosts, like will-o'wisp, spectres and pregnant spirits...all sorts of things that shouldn't exist are within their perimeters."

Kamijou again turned to look at the blond girl who was hidden in the shadows.

Seeing other people talk about herself, the red nun still remained still.

Maybe this communication breakdown in the magic world wasn't rare, as Kanzaki then explained, "Her name is Misha Kreutzev. She sucked out the poison from your wound, so you should thank her."

Sucked the poison out of the wound—on hearing that, Kamijou's ears inadvertently turn red. The wound was on the face, and though it was just healing, Kamijou couldn't help but sweat.

"Is...is that so..." Kamijou said with a hoarse voice, "Thanks, I would have been killed if you didn't step in..."

The smile that Kamijou barely forced out instantly froze.

Misha, who was originally standing slightly far away, instantly closed in to Kamijou. She used her right hand to draw out the saw that was hanging at her waist, and before Kamijou could even blink, she used the saw teeth to hold down Kamijou's neck.

Nobody could react in time, let alone Kamijou, even Tsuchimikado and Kanzaki couldn't stop her even though they were standing nearby. Kamijou could feel an icy feeling on his neck.

Kamijou lifted up his head and looked at Misha Kreutzev, who was holding onto the saw. Through the long bangs, he could see that her eyes had no hint of hesitation, and her irises were much colder than the saw.

Misha asked with a flat robotic-like tone, "My first question: Were you the one who cast Angel Fall?"

Kamijou was so scared he couldn't say anything. Tsuchimikado and Kanzaki also look stunned as they stared at Misha.

"Hold...hold on a minute! Misha Kreutzev. Didn't you assume that Kamijou Touma wasn't the culprit behind Angel Fall before you protected him and drew the poison out of him?"

In regards to Kanzaki's questions, Misha turned her eyes and said to Kanzaki.

"My first answer: I came here to prevent Angel Fall. I couldn't get the answer from this boy, so I'm asking him now."

With the saw placed against his neck, Kamijou stared at Misha's face. Misha also turned her eyes away from Kanzaki's face and onto Kamijou's face, as if seeing Kamijou's eyes.

"Repeating my first question again: Were you the one who cast Angel Fall?"

"...No."

"My second question: Can you prove it?"

Misha said what seemed to be pre-prepared questions. Maybe she expected that Kamijou could be lying.

"I don't have any proof, but I don't understand magic at all."

Misha slightly tilted her head to a side, seemingly expressing the suspicion in her heart.

Kanzaki sighed, and said, "As a member of Necessarius of the Anglican Church, I can explain this."

Then, Kanzaki started to explain to Misha that since Kamijou had no knowledge of magic at all, he couldn't possibly be the one who triggered Angel Fall. And if an esper used magic, the burden would be too great on the body, but Kamijou didn't look like he had any wounds on him. Perhaps Kamijou hadn't been affected by Angel Fall because of his right hand's Imagine Breaker ability. With that power, any supernatural power would be erased with just a single touch.

Misha continued to pay attention to every single word and she nodded several times. Finally, she stared at Kamijou; or more accurately, his right hand. Maybe the Imagine Breaker had piqued her interest.

"Values, 40, 9, 30, 7. Total is 86."

BOOM! A water pillar spurted out from the floor behind Misha. Most likely, a water pipe had burst.

"Respond. Mem ' tet ' lamed ' zayin (Oh water, form as a holy snake, and strike through like a sword)."

After Misha said that, the water pillar curved its head down like a snake, and then like a mythical Hydra or a Yamata dragon, it formed several snakes. Before Kamijou's mind could even process the danger, the water snakes came attacking like spears.

TUMP TUMP TUMP! One after another, water pillars continued to shoot out from the floor surrounding Kamijou.

And one of those pillars came at Kamijou's face directly.

"WAH!"

Kamijou frantically used his right hand to block the water pillar. The water pillar

that got blocked exploded like a balloon that was filled with water, and the water splattered all over the place. However, it seemed like Kamijou was protected by an invisible shield, as there was not a single drop of water on him.

Misha carefully looked at the water that had splattered onto the floor.

"Correct answer. The Anglican's view matches the result of the experiment just now. This answer is enough to remove the suspicion. Boy, I apologize for scaring you because of a wrong answer."

"Instead of that, you already attacked me, right? And who in the world doesn't look into the eyes when she apologizes?"

"My third question: Since you're not the culprit, who's the one who cast Angel Fall? It's a fact that the phenomenon is centered around here, do you have any thoughts of who may be the one?"

"You aren't listening to me! Seems like you aren't reflecting about it at all!"

Kamijou lay on the floor and saw the large hole in it.

At that moment, Misaka Imouto, who didn't understand what was going on at all, could only tremble as she secretly talked to Kamijou. Maybe she had finally calmed down somewhat.

"Can...can I ask you...what kind of special effects movie are you filming? And...wasn't the one who escaped just now Hino Jinsaku? Are you guys the undercover cops who often appear on TV?"

"For your own safety, I suggest that you don't interfere with our affairs."

Misaka Imouto's question was shot down completely by Kanzaki.

But Misaka Imouto's words caused Kamijou to realize something.

"Hold...hold on! That guy is Hino Jinsaku to you?"

"Who else? Anyway, who do we claim the damages from? Hino, the police, or the broadcasting agency?"

In a shock, Kamijou didn't know what to say.

For example, on the second floor, there was Aogami Pierce in a nun's habit.

To everyone, that guy was Index, but to Kamijou, he was Aogami Pierce.

That was the difference between the inside and the appearance.

But to both Kamijou and Misaka Imouto, he was still Hino Jinsaku.

Inside and appearance were the same? That meant...

"That guy...didn't get switched?"

Kamijou explained that to the magicians, and everyone looked somewhat grim.

"My fourth question: Is it the one who just escaped?"

Misha looked in the direction where Hino Jinsaku escaped. Just as Misha intended to dash out, Kanzaki grabbed her shoulder.

"Hold on, since we're aiming for the same thing, why don't we act together?"

"My fifth question: What benefits does this have to me?"

"Let me ask you then? Do you specialize in hunting humans? Are these tools on you famous interrogation tools of the tower of London? We locals don't use such things; an ordinary axe is still better than a gold or silver one."

Kanzaki continued.

"You people at the Russian Orthodox Church should specialize in exorcism, right? Hunting humans isn't a strong point of yours, and we of the Anglican Church are good in these. With us helping you out, it shouldn't be a bad thing to you."

"...Good answer. Thank you for your proposal."

Misha stretched her small hand out. Kanzaki was stunned for a moment, before realizing that she wanted to shake hands, and then smiled as she reached her own hand out to shake hands.

While both of them were talking, Kamijou, who was beside them, asked, "Alright, what should we do now? Do we go chase after him?"

"Your enthusiasm is good, and I really want Tsuchimikado to learn from you. But right now, your job is to recover. While you recover, it's best that we guard you. We don't know what Hino wants, and it's not like he won't attack in the middle of the night while you're asleep."

Hearing Kanzaki's words, Misha said, "My sixth question: Since the priority of the people that require protection is smaller, should I head out alone to hunt the suspect?"

"We don't know how strong the enemy is, so it's not a good thing to scatter our strength. In the worst case scenario, he may have obtained the power of an angel."

Misha didn't seem satisfied with that answer, but she didn't say anything else. Maybe she already regretted agreeing to work together.

However, Kanzaki ignored her and continued, "First, we have to discuss the plan with Kreutzev, and next, we have to repair the damages. Once these are done, we'll protect your safety...Tsuchimikado, why do you look so unwilling?"

Kanzaki's words made Kamijou feel that something was amiss.

Because if that was the case, they couldn't sleep. For the sake of Kamijou sleeping, they had to work hard, which Kamijou couldn't accept. Even though he was injured, that was because Kamijou hadn't paid enough attention, so he couldn't give an excuse.

Even though he thought that way, Kamijou didn't say anything, as his throat was dry and painful, as if it was burning.

At that moment, Kanzaki actually looked at Kamijou tenderly, which was completely different from her usual expression.

"We'll discuss the details with Kreutzev, and I'll tell you that later. Right now, you really need to rest. If we let ordinary civilians get hurt, it'll be really shameful on our part."

"Ya. How sad will it be if an ordinary civilian dies while the expert lives?"

Tsuchimikado said in a rare lonely tone.

Maybe those people felt like they had their own responsibilities. Kamijou sighed.

(Hm? Go...go back to my room?)

Kamijou suddenly felt that something was not right.

"Ah...AHHHHHHHHHHH! DAMN IT! INDEX!"

An idea suddenly flashed through Kamijou's mind, and then he jumped up, contrary to the expectations for an injured person.

Abandoning the speechless people, Kamijou frantically dashed up the stairs to the second level.

The handrails of the stairs had some mysterious words carved in with a knife, but once Kamijou's right hand grabbed the handrail, he seemed to hear the sound of glass breaking. Maybe the 'empty area' spell got destroyed, but Kamijou didn't have time to care about that at all.

He wasn't going for his room, and not Mikoto's room.

Kamijou tugged hard at Kamijou Touya's room. Even if the room was locked, he intended to force the door open.

BAM! With a shocking force, the door was forced open. The lights in the room were turned off, and there were two futons on the floor.

Kamijou Touya was just about to attack Index, who was sleeping in the futon.

Of course, to Touya, the person in front of him was his wife Shiina, so he wouldn't feel guilty about it.

But to Kamijou, his almost 35-year-old father was currently attacking a probably less than 14-year-old Index. That scene couldn't even be described as weird; it was already a nightmare.

"STOP STOP STOP STOP STOP! HOLD IT RIGHT THERE!"

Kamijou completely ignored the dizziness caused by the poison left inside him as he leapt between the two futons.

Touya was shocked.

And as for Index, who was acting as his mother, she was still sleeping deeply even with this commotion.

"...(T-Touma! How can you rush in at this most awkward moment?)"

"SHUT UP SHUT UP SHUT UP! WE'RE SLEEPING TOGETHER, THREE OF US! SURE-KILL, PARENT AND CHILD RELATIONSHIP BATTLE!"

Just like that, the midnight battle began.

Kanzaki's care for the injured wasn't effective at all, because Kamijou Touma wasn't able to sleep during the entire night.

## Chapter 2: The Detectives of This World at War

### Part 1

The next day.

In the cool and refreshing morning, Index, who was now Kamijou's mother, woke up from her dreamland to see the father and son with black rings around their eyes, as they continued to stare off against each other.

"Good morning. Ara ara, two men continued to talk for the entire night? I'm so envious, it feels like some field trip or some sabbatical."

It was true that on seeing the current depressing energy that permeated the atmosphere, one might have thought that it could rival 'a real gathering of a guys' room real-life experience during the night of a school excursion' (with 80% and above having plump and swollen faces while they continue to bluff each other). However, because of Kamijou's lost memory, he couldn't recall such an experience.

Anyway, as Kamijou had fought valiantly against his tired body for the entire night, he was too tired to be able to reply to Index.

(Ha...haa. Damn it, at least I managed to hold on...it's morning now, don't worry...)

As Kamijou was thinking this, he was attacked by the sleep monster and collapsed onto the futon.

With this comfortable feeling of victory, he entered dreamland.

"Here, okaa-san! Touma's already asleep, we should have a passionate kiss once

in a while in the morning, right?"

"Ara ara, can't be helped. Thinking about this so early in the morning, I really don't know what you two were talking about last night."

Touya seemed to treat Index as Snow White and he hoped to give her a wake-up kiss.

Just as the couple's lips were about to meet, Kamijou's eyes suddenly widened.

"A terrifying tongue-biting uppercut!"

Before their lips met, Touya was hit by an uppercut to the chin from Kamijou and his face flew upwards while the like landed on the futon. Kamijou hadn't actually used a lot of force, but Touya was already rather tired since he hadn't slept. It should be alright now, right? Feeling relieved, Kamijou again collapsed.

However...

Kamijou's enemy wasn't just Touya.

"ONNIIIIIIII--CHAN!! THE ALARM-CLOCK-REPLACEMENT-ATTACK IS HERE!"

Being attacked suddenly by Mikoto (who seemed really happy), Kamijou felt all the weight of her body pressed down on his chest and his body cramps inwards. His mind instantly woke up (it takes about 15 minutes for a person to start sleeping).

(Uoohh...ack...ackack! Wha...what's going on?)

"Hahahahaha!!!"

"STOP LAUGHING ON ME! HURRY UP AND GIVE ME AN EXPLANATION!"

"Captain! It's an imouto's basic skill to have a special wrestling move that can replace an alarm clock's functions!!!"

"STOP FOOLING AROUND! ARE YOU TRYING TO ACT CUTE? I'VE

HAD ENOUGH! I'M GOING TO TIE YOU UP AND STUFF YOU INTO THE GYM STOREROOM!"

At this moment, Aogami Piece, who was acting the role of Index, came into the room.

"Ah! Touma's already playing an interesting game so early in the morning! I wanna play! I wanna play!"

"HOLD...HOLD UP YOU MUSCULAR HULK! YOU'LL KILL SOMEONE WITH THAT SQUASH ATTACK!"

"Why? Why is Touma pushing me away? I wanna play, I wanna play! I must play!"

"Ah...hold...hold on! I'M SORRY, IT'S MY FAULT! I CAN AT MOST GIVE YOU 2000 YEN, PLEASE LET ME OFF...GYAAAAH!!!!"

The impact Kamijou took nearly caused his insides to explode.

"Uu...uuggghh...ha....hoho...I'm going to start killing! I'M GOING TO SMASH YOUR STUPID BRAINS LIKE A WATERMELON!!!"

Just like that, the second day of the Angel Fall phenomenon opened with a bang.

## **Part 2**

Noon.

Kamijou's family (including the nun who was freeloading at Kamijou's house) were all playing at the beach, leaving Kamijou alone in the resort on the excuse of summer illness. The moment everyone left, Kanzaki, Tsuchimikado and Misha stepped into the Wadatsumi resort.

As Tsuchimikado's appearance was that of an idol who had recently created trouble, it would have been troublesome if the boss saw him, so they held the meeting in Kamijou's room.

On a side note, the reason why Kamijou hadn't done anything all morning was because Kamijou really was unable to move due to morning illness. This tragedy was due to a lack of sleep, insufficient intake of water and the hot weather.

Misha seemed to have searched for Hino alone in the morning, but she couldn't find anything. Kamijou felt rather self-loathing that he had become everyone's baggage.

"Really...what were you thinking for the entire night?"

Right now, Kamijou looked like a plant that had withered because someone forgot to water it. With Kanzaki raging and worried as she lectured him, Kamijou felt even more depressed.

At that moment, Tsuchimikado, who was wearing blue sunglasses, grimaced and said, "Okay, okay Kanzaki nee-chin, there's no need to make the patient feel worse."

"You're too naive, Tsuchimikado. When you have to scold, you have to scold heavily, or he may end up repeating that again! I always see him getting into trouble. We can deal with it!"

Kanzaki sounded like she was lecturing a child who had just played with fire, and these words hit Kamijou the hardest. Unable to stand this any longer, Tsuchimikado put his mouth near Kanzaki's ear and whispered to her like a couple.

"...(Nee-chin, is it really alright to pressure Kami-yan like that? Kami-yan did drag his poisoned body along to protect the Index that you care for the most!)"

"Uuu..."

Kanzaki was stunned.

"...(You should be thanking him, right? Why are you angry at him instead? Besides, you haven't thanked him for what happened the last time.)"

"Uuu..."

Kanzaki's entire body froze.

Standing slightly further away while looking at Kanzaki and Tsuchimikado, Misha sighed. Though she didn't say anything, Misha must have been feeling that this was rather funny. Since she normally lowered her head, and her face was often covered with her bangs, it was hard to see her expression.

Kamijou had a feeling that if that meaningless conversation kept going, the hastily-assembled group would break up. Starting to worry, he decided to take up the role of the leader for the meeting.

"Speaking of which, the culprit behind Angel Fall is Hino Jinsaku, right?"

Hino Jinsaku was the man who had attacked Kamijou from below the floor yesterday.

"According to the eyewitness report I got from Misaka Imouto, that person wasn't changed."

Kanzaki looked at Kamijou and said, "I didn't see Hino Jinsaku directly, so I didn't dare to conclude this. But if he really wasn't switched, he's most likely the suspect."

"...In other words, we just need to capture Hino Jinsaku...but..."

Looking rather bothered, Tsuchimikado stroked his sunglasses.

It was not that easy to capture Hino Jinsaku. He hadn't left any trails behind, so it was impossible to tell where he escaped to.

"Since Hino's a magician, can't we just track his magic trail?"

"My first answer: We couldn't trace the trail of magic that Hino used last night. It's likely that he may have used some masking method to prevent being traced."

"The most important angel also didn't leave any trails. If an angel-like magical energy is left alone, the huge amount of energy can even cause the ground to distort, so he must be using some other method to hide the power of the angel."

"Hiding...is it really that simple?"

In regards to Kamijou's question, Kanzaki pondered for a moment, before continuing.

"According to records in the Old Testament, angels did hide their identities to enter ordinary people's cities and have meals with ordinary people. Also, there was a story that an archangel walked into a river to save an infant from drowning. Maybe we have to assume that angels have extremely skilled techniques in hiding their powers."

On hearing Kanzaki's words, Misha nodded her head slowly.

Though her bangs obscured any expression, Misha seemed satisfied. This response was similar to what Index often did; it seemed like nuns loved to talk about things in the Bible.

"Anyway, all we can do right now is to compile all our information."

Tsuchimikado said this, and then turned on the old TV in the corner of the room.

On the news, Komoe-sensei was still holding onto the microphone as she reported the news.

"...It's been past a whole day since Hino Jinsaku escaped from jail. Right now, we have professor Ono Raizen of Miwa University's criminologist department. who'll give us an in-depth analysis. Professor Ono, please."

Saying 'thank you' with a heavy tone, Professor Ono looked like a third grader. The show looked like some children's education show when both of them appeared on screen. Professor Ono said,

"Hino Jinsaku's modus operandi is extremely rare in the history of crime. He did kill 28 innocent victims, but he insisted that this wasn't voluntary. He said that he was just following orders from an 'Angel-sama'. To be honest, this feels somewhat similar to the ritual killings of the religious crimes in Europe and America."

The elementary school kid dressed in Western clothes continued to rattle on. Kamijou nodded his head.

"That's right, Hino did mention yesterday of an Angel-sama. This analyst should be talking about the 'Hino before he was switched', and this can prove the one 'before he got switched' is the same as 'the one after switching'."

"My first question: Let me confirm this again, is this Hino Jinsaku the culprit behind Angel Fall?"

Hearing Misha's question, Kamijou nodded his head again.

Unlike Kamijou, Hino didn't have the power of the Imagine Breaker, but he never got switched. Therefore, Hino Jinsaku was the most likely suspect.

"But who is the Angel-sama?"

"As for that, while I was repairing the floor yesterday, I found this underneath the floor."

Tsuchimikado pulled out a thin block of wood that was about the size of a notebook. The wood block was scarred thoroughly on the surface, as if someone had used a nail to scar it, and there didn't seem to be any place without a scar.

"What's carved onto it seems to be letters, and because there were so many letters carved onto it, they seem so packed together."

Tsuchimikado sighed.

"This is somewhat similar to an oracle or a John's Pen mode. Hino may just be following orders of the 'right hand that was naturally carving out words', like some Kokkuri-san or Planchette."

(...Kokkuri-san?)

Kamijou felt that something wasn't right, but he didn't say this out loud, since they were the experts here.

"We can tell that this ritual killing that the Angel-sama commanded took 28 lives away...what kind of ritual is that?"

"...Maybe that's Angel Fall?"

Kamijou couldn't understand the talk about some world-level magic spell and huge ritual arena, but it was really spine-chilling to hear 28 live sacrifices. It really sounded like those black magic spells to worship demons.

"But if that's the case, things got a lot more complicated. Assuming that Angel Fall really was casted by Hino, the one who commanded him was this Angel-sama. Why would an angel deliberately cast such a spell like Angel Fall."

Tsuchimikado folded his arms and pondered. At this moment, Kamijou answered without hesitation.

"...Maybe the most simple reason is that the angel wanted to descend into the mortal realm?"

"Um, Kami-yan, your explanation here has a huge flaw. The angels have no personalities. Angels are messengers of heaven, and their real appearances are like humanoid balloons with lots of abnormal power within them. In Idol Theory, a fake cross can obtain power, and the angels are the same. In theory, an angel's power can be divided into 100 and invoked into swords and armor. Also, without God's commands, angels themselves won't automatically create miracles on their own, help good people or defeat evil. Angels are basically like remote controlled cars in this regard."

"...So angels are like these?"

"Ya. In the Final Judgment described in the New Testament, God will judge the humanity of mankind at the end of the world. Sending good people into heaven and bad people into hell. Before that, angels can't deliberately save or kill people as it may change history." Tsuchimikado continued, "Oh ya, like what I just mentioned, angels are like remote-controlled cars of God. If one of the cars couldn't receive the commands because of some failure, or if the command received was wrong, it will become what we call a demon."

Tsuchimikado's words really surprised Kamijou. The angels and demons that often appeared in video games were completely different things. In his own impression, angels were just some random dumb blond beauties (with wings attached) that loved to watch from the heavens. Of course, this impression came from movies and manga.

"..."

At this moment, Kamijou didn't think again as he said, "Maybe the angel wanted a heart?"

"Since it doesn't have a heart, how can it desire one? Though angels look like they have their own will and can move about on their own, that's just a false impression. They're like stringed puppets, they can't move when the strings controlling them are snapped."

Said Tsuchimikado, scratching his head.

"As for the reason behind this, we just have to ask Hino after we catch him. Right now, let's thoroughly discuss what the enemy has."

After Tsuchimikado finished speaking, Misha just glanced at him slightly. However, she did not add on. It seemed like she wasn't used to initiating a conversation, only asking questions or giving answers. Thus, only Kanzaki could continue.

"First point, did Hino Jinsaku control an angel?"

"From what we discussed, I think we can exclude that. Besides, if Hino did completely control an angel, why didn't he use the power when he was in such a critical situation?" Tsuchimikado thought for a moment, and then continued, "Maybe Hino isn't able to command the angel fully, as if there were some static on a radio signal. Also, it seems like Hino had to follow the angel's orders, so in that critical situation, I don't think that Hino was able to get the angel to help him."

Now that he mentioned it, Hino, who was desperate, bemoaned why Angel-sama wouldn't help him out.

"But on the other hand, if the angel got his orders, it is still likely that it will accept Hino's command when he's in danger, right?"

Hearing Kanzaki say that, the eyes hidden under Tsuchimikado's shades revealed a haughty expression.

"Well, it's not a bad thing to think of the worst case scenarios. But...hoho...if we really want to go against an angel, the history of Mankind will most likely meet an end."

Even though Tsuchimikado had said that, Kamijou couldn't really imagine it.

What was an angel? How would the world look like when humanity is destroyed?

"Next, we'll analyze his allies' support. Is there a likelihood that Hino may be under the charge of a certain group or organization?"

"That's a really low probability. If Hino really has comrades, he wouldn't be alone when the 'Angel-sama' commanded him to carry out the 'sneak attack'. Of course, it's a different case if his comrades are working on other things."

"Hm...it's unlikely that he has an accomplice. If so, where is Hino going to heal himself? According to Kreutzev, Hino has two teeth pulled out, and his left wrist is fractured."

"He'll definitely be arrested if he stupidly decides to walk into a hospital. Even if he wants to find a private doctor, he shouldn't have any money with him when he just escaped from jail. If so, either he's going to rob a cash truck or he's preparing to cast a recovery spell."

"Either way, we can't guarantee it. Also, I want to know how he got the knife and the poison. Maybe he hid it some place, or maybe he got them when he attacked someone. He may also have funds, or not. Or maybe he has accomplices who gave him the weapons. Since we're not criminologists, overly guessing here will give us more wrong information."

Kanzaki sighed and stopped talking.

Once someone became quiet, the entire conversation was interrupted. The atmosphere seemed rather heavy. Only the sound of the TV continued to echo about without any feelings.

At that moment, the originally calm voice from the TV set sounded rather panicky.

Turning around to look, Kamijou saw the huge words 'breaking news' flashed on the TV. The baffling analyst was shoved aside, and Komoe-sensei looked shocked as she saw the sudden news report that was shoved into her hands.

"Ah, we have the latest news on the Hino Jinsaku jailbreak! Hino's in a house in Kanegawa-ken, and the police assault squads have already arrived at the scene, surrounding the house! Reporting from the...can you hear me? Reporting from the scene is reporter Kugimiya..."

Everyone was now staring intently at the TV; even Misha Kreutzev was silently peering over.

The screen changed.

Two-story tall houses were located on the sides of this commonly seen residential street scene. The originally quiet street was now bustling with interested onlookers, policemen were blocking the civilians, and assault squad members were dressed up as if they were ready to go to war. The entire place was buzzing, but the policemen and assault squad members were converted into old grandpas and kindergarten children, so it looked really unnerving.

A man who looked like a vegetable seller held onto the microphone and said, "Dear viewers, as you're seeing now, all the people, including us reporters are stopped just six hundred meters away from the house that Hino Jinsaku took refuge in. The civilians here seem to be residents who received the advice to escape to safety. According to reliable sources, Hino Jinsaku pulled all the curtains and the windows up after he escaped, so nobody outside could see what's going on."

Tsuchimikado lowered his voice and cursed.

The eyes behind the blue sunglasses revealed his anxiety.

It was unknown whether he was worried that things would be more difficult due to the situation escalating, or whether he was worried about the residents in the house.

"We don't know what the situation is in the residence. We don't know whether there are hostages, and we don't know what sort of weapon Hino Jinsaku has, so the assault squads aren't attacking...ah, something's happening. A car just entered a restricted area. Is that the police's negotiator?"

The screen changed to the bird-eye's view from a helicopter. The red roofed house should be where Hino Jinsaku was hiding.

"Idiot..."

Kamijou couldn't help but curse. Lifting the helicopter above the residence would only cause unnecessary disturbance to Hino Jinsaku, and it was likely that he was watching the TV. It was a good thing that it was just an enlarged image; if they showed a bird-eye's view of the surroundings, it would basically be telling Hino of the assault squad's location.

(...Eh?)

Suddenly, that image caused Kamijou to feel something strange. However, the image was unnaturally switched back to the studio; maybe it got restricted. Komoe-sensei looked helpless as she read the news, and the content was basically about the crimes Hino committed and a reminder to the surrounding residents not to leave their homes.

"Alright, things just got messy. If Hino lands into the police's hands, it'll be hard for us to make him remove the Angel Fall spell. If possible, we should take Hino away before the police, but what should we do?"

"Tsuchimikado! You know what will happen if he has a hostage!?"

It was rare to see Kanzaki so agitated, but Tsuchimikado merely replied casually.

"Hm, no matter what we do, we have to get to the scene of the crime. But where is it? Kanegawa-ken."

At that moment, Kamijou timidly raised his hand as he requested to speak.

Kanzaki said in an impatient tone, "What do you want to say? If you want to go there, I refuse. I'm different from Stiyl, I don't intend to bring you to the scene."

"It's not that, I just noticed from the aerial footage..."

"What?"

"Ah...well...that...I may be mistaken...and even if it's true..."

"Hurry up and say it, stop beating around the bush."

"Um...my mom has an interest in paragliding...ah, there are many kinds of paragliders; one type uses a motor. I don't really know, but it's basically sitting on a chair that looks like a swing and flying with a huge propeller on the back. My mom sent me lots of photos when I was hospitalized; I don't know what's so fun about it, but these were shot in the air near my house..."

"Aerial shots? So what..."

Before she could finish, Kanzaki suddenly understood.

Kamijou nodded and said, "I find that red roof familiar...I often see that in the aerial shots near my house."

### **Part 3**

Pain will cause people to lose their cool when they make decisions.

The escaped convict Hino Jinsaku silently cursed as he grabbed the left hand that was like a rotten fruit. Though it was not yet noon, all the windows and blinds were pulled up, so light couldn't enter.

The electricity seemed to have been cut off by the assault squad outside. In this late August summer season, sealing all the windows up without turning on the air conditioning and letting the hot air gather wasn't any different from a greenhouse. Though he knew that he was thinking too much, the room was really too hot, making him worry that his wounds would rot because of the heat.

On the way there, he had managed to pick up some metal wires and a wooden stick to hold his wrist together. However, the teeth that had been pulled out couldn't be treated medically now. The wound brought out a mysterious scalding and numbing pain.

This heat and pain caused Hino Jinsaku to sweat heavily, and he muttered to

himself in the darkness.

"Angel-sama, Angel-sama..."

He continued to mutter as he considered the current situation.

After Hino became the infamous mysterious killer who killed 28 people through ritual-like killings, there were a lot of people who appeared on the internet, either worshipers or con-artists. Among them was a college student who created a website to support the serial killer Hino Jinsaku, and that person lived in an apartment nearby. After he escaped from prison, Hino had wanted to use that hiding place and the funds he provided...

It was impossible to watch the television when the house had no electricity, so he couldn't tell what was going on outside. However, the residents nearby seemed to have been ordered to evacuate. If that was the case, the helper who was living nearby would have been chased outside the perimeter.

"Angel-sama, Angel-sama..."

What should I do now? Hino started to think. Right now, the assault squads didn't seem like they intended to attack, maybe because they still didn't know what was the situation inside the house. But if they found out that there were no hostages inside the house, they would immediately charge in.

He couldn't let the assault squad figure out his bluff, so the trick was to maintain the secrecy. Being a specialist in psychological attack, Hino understood that the most savage and rowdy criminals weren't the hardest to handle, but the ones who were so silent they're scary.

What should he do? How could he escape?

He still had a curved knife in his hand, but that alone wasn't going to break through.

"Angel-sama, Angel-sama..."

At that moment, Hino's right hand started to move on its own.

The edge of the blade stabbed Hino's abdomen in a shallow manner, and carved

out words.

The red oracle, carved onto his flesh, silently answered his question.

CALL AN AMBULANCE.

I see, there was still this trick. Hino really felt impressed about it. As expected, the Angel-sama's words definitely wouldn't be wrong. Though I once got arrested by the police and got sentenced to death, Angel-sama will help me fulfill my desire to live on. Angel-sama will bless me a wonderful future. Since I know what to do, let's get into action.

Without even intending to wrap his wounds on the abdomen, Hino Jinsaku immediately got ready for the preparation.

## **Part 4**

Kamijou Touma had lost his memory.

Thus, Kamijou didn't even know where his old house was. Using the excuse of going to the toilet, Kamijou left Tsuchimikado and company. He recalled the aerial footage he saw on the TV and used the GPS function of the phone to find an approximate location.

Luckily, the aerial footage had managed to capture a large shopping center, which was located mainly in the Kyushu region. There was only one in Kanagawa-ken, so Kamijou managed to get the location immediately.

However, the GPS image wouldn't be able to show the family name.

Kamijou could only find the approximate location and then search through the commotion.

After confirming the location, Kamijou walked out of the toilet and onto the

beach. Ignoring the people playing on the beach, he headed to the umbrella that was slightly further away. How careless of them to have left all their luggage bags here. Kamijou felt somewhat guilty as he searched through his father's wallet and pulled out his old house keys; and then he returned back to the Wadatsumi.

Kanzaki was waiting at the first level of the Wadatsumi.

"Alright, where's your old house?"

"Hm, it'll take twenty minutes to get there. The easiest way is to take a taxi over."

"...Let me ask you again, are you really going to go there? You don't have to accompany us, you know."

"...Let me answer you again, that's my house. If I leave it to you guys, you guys will mess it up, and my house will vanish from the map."

Even though he said that, Kamijou was partly worried about Kanzaki and Tsuchimikado. Though Misha had sent Hino Jinsaku retreating yesterday through overwhelming force, it didn't mean that he could relax.

"Since Hino's a magician, my right hand can at least be of some use here. As for that, I suppose we all understood that when you guys tried to pull my beach pants down."

Kanzaki was inadvertently silent. At this moment, Tsuchimikado and Misha were there. Though Kamijou didn't know who Misha got switched with, Tsuchimikado was a troublemaking idol now, so it would be troublesome if he met the resort boss.

"Hi, Kami-yan! If you're ready, hurry up and lets go! You're the only one who knows where your house is, we need you to lead us."

Misha remained silent. The weather was so hot, yet she wasn't sweating at all.

"Ah, as for that, it takes twenty minutes to get to my house by car, so we better take a cab."

"Eh?" Tsuchimikado sounded rather unhappy as he said, "Seems like I have to hide before the taxi arrives. It'll be bad if the boss who looks like Stiyl sees me."

After saying that, Tsuchimikado left the resort like a ninja.

"Tsuchimikado!"

Kanzaki shouted as she followed. Maybe Tsuchimikado's attitude of wanting to drag Kamijou down made her unhappy.

Kamijou remained stunned for a while, then he pulled out his cell phone to hail a taxi.

After ending the phone call, he wondered, (Oh yeah, who's paying for it? I don't want to! But if we have to play rock-paper-scissors, I'll lose...)

Thinking about that, Kamijou suddenly felt that someone was behind him.

Misha Kreutzev was still standing there.

"WAHH!"

Having thought that Misha would have disappeared, Kamijou shrieked.

"My first question: Why are you so panicky?"

"Nothing..."

Kamijou didn't know how to explain it.

Misha's method of asking was very suitable for information exchange, but it was not suited to chit-chat at all.

The taxi would take five to ten minutes to arrive. Tsuchimikado and Kanzaki had disappeared, so there was nobody else to talk to. However, Kamijou was reluctant to leave Misha alone, so he could only stay here. This awkward silence was like taking an elevator.

And Misha was basically wearing what was similar to underwear with a coat over it. While both of them were alone, Kamijou even felt embarrassed to look at her.

(This...this is too intense...damn it...I can't even smile at all...)

Thirty seconds into the silence, and Kamijou was unable to take it. Kamijou preferred to have 'a cheerful dinner table gathering'. He looked around to find something they could talk about, and then searched his pockets. He touched something hard, and pulled it out; it was chewing gum.

"You...you want some?"

Kamijou carefully asked, but Misha remained unmoving.

"My second question: From your question, this should be a form of food, right?"

"It can be eaten, but it can't be swallowed."

Misha suspiciously tilted her head. Kamijou again passed the chewing gum to Misha, who moved her hand slowly. She nudged the edge of the chewing gum with one finger, not touching Kamijou's fingers at all. Her movements were rather uncommon; it was like a shop attendant passing the change to the customer.



It seemed like Misha had never seen chewing gum before, and she stared at the paper wrapped object for quite a while before peeling it carefully. She then brought the chewing gum to her nose and sniffed it like a small animal, before sticking her tongue out and licking the chewing gum gently.

(Uu...seems like I'm not trusted at all...she's actually testing for poison...)

Even though his face was smiling, Kamijou was crying deep inside. Misha finally put the chewing gum into her mouth. After taking the first chew, she stopped. Maybe the feeling of the chewing gum was something she never experienced? Misha maintained this position before her small mouth started to move again. It seemed like she was rather satisfied.

"My personal opinion: Hm, sweet foods are good. I often say that sweets are a source of longevity, it reminds me of God's grace."

Though her expression was hidden by her bangs, her lips seemed to be smiling.

At that moment, Kamijou was finally released from the heavy atmosphere.

Seeing Misha chew the gum like a child, he heaved a sigh of relief.

However, Misha's throat rolled with a 'glup'.

"WAH! WHY DID YOU SWALLOW IT?"

"My third question: Why are you so panicky? Is this a chewing type cigarette that can't be swallowed?"

Seeing Kamijou shout on reflex, Misha just looked puzzled as she tilted her head. She then reached her hand out with an of-course attitude, meaning 'I want another one'.

(Is this really alright?)

Kamijou wondered if he should teach her the correct way to consume chewing gum.

(Never mind, it's something that can be put into the mouth and chewed. It

shouldn't be poisonous...)

Kamijou then took out another piece of chewing gum and passed it to Misha, and she pinched the chewing gum as she received it.

Kamijou though didn't know that the main component of chewing gum was synthetic rubber.

## Part 5

After a while, the taxi arrived. Kamijou and company boarded it and headed to the perimeter. The driver (because of the appearance switch, the person holding the steering wheel was a female high school student) said that the police had already sealed the road off, and the taxi could only go halfway. Kamijou and company indicated that it was alright.

Kanzaki's nodachi was about two meters long, and extended from the back end to the front seats in the cramped car. Though the driver looked really bothered, since it was a nodachi, she didn't care to complain about it.

The four of them disembarked some place far away from where the onlookers were gathered.

While disembarking, the driver saw Tsuchimikado's face.

"You're an idol--right? My daughter really likes you!"

The taxi driver then happily opened his notebook, and Tsuchimikado smiled as he gave a huge autograph.

The taxi left. If the reports on the TV were true, the perimeter net around the scene should be six hundred meters in radius.

"Speaking of which, wouldn't that be too exaggerating? Why must they set up

such a large net when the police don't even have enough manpower? Can't they just shrink it?"

Kamijou's reply to this question was easy, but it gave him an uncomfortable feeling.

"Maybe the higher ups have allowed them to fire? This is to prevent the civilians from being hit by stray bullets."

However, even if it was a bank robbery, the police wouldn't have set up such a large road blockage. Maybe to the police, today's incident wouldn't be settled by one or two shots. It may end up as a large scale mechanical and explosive battle. Such high level alert was only seen in Europe and America, when explosives were involved, and this was a rarity in Japan. Besides, there was only one convict. Maybe Hino Jinsaku was a rather unique criminal to the police.

As Kamijou wondered about that, Kanzaki and Tsuchimikado started to discuss the actions they should take next.

"Hm, the media's helicopter is gone. Maybe they got warned by the police."

"The reporters on the ground are also sealed off by the barricade. Those wolf-like guys can actually listen. That's weird, maybe someone's pressuring them from above."

Tsuchimikado said that as he readjusted the tilted pair of blue shades. It seemed like he was really after those gossiping reporters.

"Are you saying someone in the Japanese police has realized that Hino Jinsaku used Angel Fall? But I thought that report from earlier this year determined a 0th Investigation Department that specializes in spiritual matters was a groundless rumor."

"I'm not talking about that dimension. Those people are just afraid of someone capturing the image of the 0.22 caliber rounds the police use when they blow Hino's brains out. Political figures require a much better image than idols. It's complicated."

Kanzaki revealed an irritated look as she looked at the no entry area. Misha continued to chew on her chewing gum.

After looking at those three experts, Kamijou said, "Now what? There's still the crowd and the police out there. How are we going to go back to my house? Do we have to go by the sewers?"

"The police must have considered that Hino may escape by the sewers. Anyway, let's get to your house first."

Tsuchimikado said that as a matter of fact, and Kamijou was inadvertently stunned.

"How?"

"You're asking how? Of course we're going by the front."

Tsuchimikado said that as he pointed to the concrete wall of a nearby residence.

The police had already sealed off all the roads nearby.

But on the other hand, there wouldn't be any police on 'those places that aren't roads'. The nearby residents had evacuated, and the gardens of the residences were blocked by the shrubs and the walls, forming a space that couldn't be seen from the road.

Tsuchimikado and company casually passed by the residences, and Kamijou followed. They jumped past the hedges and climbed over the walls to get from one residence to another.

Of course, this alone wasn't enough to escape the police's eyes.

Though the police were watching the roads, it didn't mean that they would ignore the gardens of the civilians, car shades and the like. If Kamijou and company were to be seen by them, they would definitely be arrested.

That's right, if they were spotted.

But Tsuchimikado and company were able to use various opportunities, like when a policeman just so happened to be talking to another one nearby, or one who was focused on the wireless broadcast, or those who just saw a stray cat leap out of a dark corner, or one who was staring at the sky for no reason...they continued to use these chances to quickly slip by the police. And they never got

stopped. The moment they slipped through just so happened to be the time the police revealed an opening, as if everything was timed.

Basically, the outcome was that Tsuchimikado and company were running all the way without stopping as they slipped through the perimeter.

And they even brought the amateur Kamijou along.

At that moment, Kamijou was reminded of some video games—the spy games where one had to slip through and hide in those buildings that were occupied by terrorists, or a ninja who had to get through those Japanese style buildings that had guards roaming around, or something similar. Kamijou seemed to be under the illusion that he was seeing a record being smashed or something.

But reality was a little different from the games.

The stages of the games were designed to be broken through.

A perimeter in real life however was designed to prevent people from entering.

It sounded like nothing much, but the difference between them was huge.

Seeing such amazing prowess, Kamijou realized that Tsuchimikado, who he felt was close to him, was actually an expert, and that made him extremely bitter. Tsuchimikado, who was humming as he easily passed the perimeter, seemed a bit further away from Kamijou now.

After passing through the six hundred meter radius police perimeter, they hadn't met a single soul for a while. But after running inside, they found some people who were armed with armored clothes and transparent shields. They were the assault forces members, but there were some people who were switched into grandpas and grandmas, so they didn't really look reliable.

At that moment, Tsuchimikado stopped and hid behind a car on the road. The rest followed suit.

"Alright, it's now difficult to sneak it. The forces surrounding Kami-yan's house are all watching with binoculars, so it's impossible to go in without being discovered."

"Impossible...? Then how?"

Kamijou was shocked that they came all the way there, only to be out of ideas.

"Yah, though magic spells that can interfere with consciousness will cause the assault forces to sleep or be unconscious, this will end up with no one responding to the wireless communication. The police outside may suspect that something's wrong."

Kanzaki paused.

She was considering what was just said.

"How about we use spells that don't change their judgment?"

Kamijou didn't understand it at all, and Misha silently stared at Kanzaki.

"Basically, we just need to let the assault forces think that another house is Kamijou Touma's house. With this, no matter what happens inside Kamijou Touma's house, the assault forces will report that everything's clear."

Shua! A gust of wind could be heard.

Numerous steel wires appeared beside Kanzaki. If it wasn't for the reflected sunlight, the naked eye would definitely have been unable to see them.

"Boundary of Forbidden Wires—a summoning circle that originates from South East Asia. It's meant to summon a god that protects houses."

"How can you reveal my methods in front of them so thoroughly, Tsuchimikado?" Kanzaki sighed, and said, "If we have to use it on all the assault forces, it seems like we need a one-hundred-meter radius web. The work will take about twenty minutes, so find a place to hide first."

"Roger that~"

Tsuchimikado stroked the blue shades with his fingertips as he casually replied.

"Also, Kamijou Touma, don't touch these wires. The Boundary of Forbidden Wires uses a three-dimensional magic array formed by the wires to replace a

two-dimensional one. The wires are the core of the boundary, so the magic may be dissipated if your right hand touches it."

"I got it, I won't be so stupid to touch the wires when my fingers can be cut off. My right hand just got sliced off a while back, and I don't want to have another limb separated. No matter how unfortunate I am, I don't have to be that pitiful, do I?"

Suddenly, the expression on Kanzaki's face disappeared.

"Eh? But Kami-yan, wasn't it 'the good thing among all the bad things' when your hand got cut during the Misawa Cram School battle?"

Tsuchimikado and Kamijou didn't notice the slight change on Kanzaki's face.

"Who will be happy with getting a hand sliced off!? Meeting someone like that damned pedophile of an alchemist is already my misfortune."

Crack! Kanzaki turned away from Kamijou.

Kamijou felt a chill down his back as he inadvertently turned to look at Kanzaki. This was a subconscious act, similar to what humans would do when endangered.

Kanzaki's back was emotionless now.

"Wha...what? Are you unhappy?"

"Nothing."

Kanzaki answered.

Kanzaki left Kamijou as she went to set up the Boundary of Forbidden Wires. While leaving, she didn't even look back.

She dashed into an empty area and started to set up the wires one by one.

What was different in an ordinary city as compared to Academy City was that there were telephone poles on the road, which made it easy to hide the wires and

support them. Kanzaki used the poles and cables to form a one-hundred-meter radius three-dimensional magic array that created a unique wavelength of magic to cause the assault forces to be wrong in their judgment. The Boundary of Forbidden Wires looked like a Chinese wok, but Kamijou may have thought that it looked like a saucer-shaped antenna.

Kamijou.

Hearing him say the word 'misfortune', Kanzaki frowned.

(It's not his fault. I shouldn't have taken it out on him.)

Logically she knew that, but a certain illogical emotion made Kanzaki not want to remain there.

Kanzaki had a bad memory about the word 'misfortune'.

If possible, she would not like to hear that again.

Afraid of the dusty memory being opened up again, Kanzaki chose to run. Faster, stronger, concentrate. The act of concentrating caused her to not think of those things she was afraid of.

After Kanzaki ran away, Kamijou, who was hiding in the shade of the car, sighed.

He was shocked that the magicians were so lazy they didn't have a plan, even though they were so powerful. Basically, if Kanzaki just so happened to be unable to use that 'so-so boundary', what did they intend to do? Were they going to stand around and laze? Even if they were those special forces 'who specialize in eliminating' in the movies, there would be some scenes where they were seen planning with the layouts before charging into a building occupied by terrorists.

Speaking of which, the last time he fought the alchemist with the rune magician during the Misawa Cram School incident, there hadn't seemed to be any plan.

Kamijou complained about this to Tsuchimikado, but Tsuchimikado's response was "Of course".

"Kami-yan, we magicians are experts, but we aren't like those trained special forces. We aren't like soldiers who are trained to be organized in killing, and we aren't trained to have teamwork. We're amateurs in battle."

"What?"

Kamijou frowned.

To Kamijou, the words 'battling amateurs' certainly didn't match these magicians.

"Are you kidding me? Those people like Stiyl and Aureolus can just laugh and beat up a type-90 tank from the front! Those battle maniacs, those destructive monsters, how can they be amateurs?"

Misha silently reached her hand out to Kamijou, and Kamijou again passed a chewing gum to her. Like a cashier handing money to the customer, Misha received the chewing gum without touching Kamijou's hand.

Through the blue shades, Tsuchimikado saw that action between Kamijou and Misha.

"That's like being a middle schooler with a nuke launch button in the hand. Though we have amazing magic abilities, that isn't the result of military training."

Tsuchimikado chuckled.

"Or else you would have felt weird right, Kami-yan? If magicians were trained professionally, why would they harbour so many personal feelings in battle? Knowing the shocking truth and being stunned in front of the enemy, treating the enemy's words as true, pitying the enemy, wanting to fight the enemy one on one—the battles between magicians have too many unnecessary elements."

If they really were a group of cold-blooded killing machines who were trained, they wouldn't listen to the enemy, wouldn't pity them, wouldn't want to face the enemy head on, or even enter the enemy's line of sight. Even if they knew the shocking truth, they would choose to beat the enemy down. Once they got an order to kill, even if the enemy grabbed a child to use as a human shield, they would still pierce the enemy's heart together with the child. That was a real

professional fighter.

"Basically, magicians are kids. Kids with knives, kids who are crying and trembling, for they were once betrayed by the world."

Tsuchimikado sighed.

"Magicians are like this. They have wishes, and once prayed to God, but never got a response. Having lost it, they could only toss their bodies into this underground world called magic."

Kamijou couldn't say anything. Tsuchimikado was a magician; even though he was looking rather casual, the person in front of him was a magician. That teenager who had a smile on his face almost every time must probably have a blank spot within him.

Misha, who was silently chewing the chewing gum, must be the same as well.

"The term 'magician'—especially the modern magicians that were established in the tenth century, will carve their wishes onto their souls. This is the magic name. Carving the reason why they want to learn magic or give up their entire lives for the one goal by writing it out in Latin. Like for me, I'm Fallere825, Kanzaki nee-chin's Salvare000. The numbers behind are used to prevent others from repeating the word, so this is like an email authentication."

"...Thi—"

—How much must one be prepared to give up? Kamijou wondered. Even if he himself didn't have much of a real goal, Kamijou knew that it was a tough thing to talk about one's own dreams in front of others. Besides, everyone would be afraid of getting their dreams rejected. Many wanted to be idols or sportspeople, and gave up their dreams after their parents and teachers rubbished them. That was because the impact of having a dream denied was huge.

Weren't those aspiring magicians afraid?

Why could they make such a realization of not giving up even when many people would doubt them?

"To people like us, the term 'group' isn't too significant. We just so happen to

gather because we have similar goals. Whether it's Kanzaki nee-chin or Stiyl, once the group becomes an obstacle to their goal in life, they can betray the organization easily. However, because of the hostage that's Index, they won't leave so easily."

Though the term 'hostage' shocked Kamijou, he just sighed.

The magician's definition of an expert was completely different from that of a special forces soldier, and right now, Kamijou could somewhat understand it. The magicians were different from those people who could go against their own will for money and kill. Magicians didn't listen to orders, and didn't want money, but they wouldn't go against their own beliefs—those who pushed this naive thought to the extreme were called experts among magicians.

(...If so...)

Kamijou looked at where Kanzaki left.

No one was there. It was just a wide, empty street.

Kanzaki hadn't looked happy when she left.

(Did I say something that hurt her beliefs as an expert?)

Seeing Kamijou being so insecure, Tsuchimikado smiled.

"Ah, Kanzaki nee-chin must be unhappy because she heard the word 'misfortune' nya."

"Misfortune...? Did I just say that?"

Kamijou tilted his head and recalled. He turned to Misha, who didn't say anything as she continued to chew on the chewing gum silently.

"To Kami-yan, 'fukou da' became a catchphrase already, right? In fact, Kanzaki nee-chin is bothered by her own misfortune."

"...'fukou'?"

Kamijou looked like he didn't understand, and Tsuchimikado nodded.

"In Japan, there's a secret Christian sect called the Amakusa. Nee-chin was designated to be the Priestess of this group before she was born. Also, she's one of the Saints who's blessed with the Stigma from God, and it's said that there's only about twenty of them."

Tsuchimikado smiled.

But it was now different from the casual ones before.

"She has the talent of succeeding no matter whether she works hard or not, she doesn't even need to do anything in order to earn the hearts of the people. Every day, she will have an unexpected surprise. Even if she's to be assassinated, she can survive because of luck. The bullet will deviate for no reason. Even if a bomb explodes beside her, she can survive without so much of a scratch."

Tsuchimikado's words sounded like a lullaby,

"--So Kanzaki nee-chin couldn't forgive her own fortune. No, she's probably cursing her curse."

"...What? Is there really any need to be troubled?"

As for Kamijou who was always filled with misfortune, this was truly a position worth envying.

"Who knows, maybe you should experience it to understand it."

Tsuchimikado smiled.

But he didn't look happy at all.

"But Kami-yan, how's the feeling when someone is lucky? When there's only one winning lottery ticket and someone will always draw it, doesn't that mean that other people won't be able to ever win it?"

"...Ah..."

"She's had the Priestess position ever since she was born, but others who wanted the position couldn't fulfill their dreams. She had the ability to succeed when others despaired after trying so hard. She managed to be the center of attention

without doing anything, but other people at the center are forced out. Her wishes will always come true, she will always have a surprise everyday, but there are people behind her who can't fulfill it, and can only choose to give up all hope. She can survive so many assassinations without any reason at all, but the weak will protect her and die in front of her. Many who admired her have died blocking bullets for her, taking the explosions, and so on."

"..."

"If nee-chin was a bad person, she wouldn't even need to worry. However, she couldn't forgive herself for taking up all the fortune. It's because she loves the people around her that she can't forgive herself for being the lucky person who brings misfortune to others."

Tsuchimikado sighed.

He looked up at the sky and said, "In the end, nee-chin couldn't take it anymore. She couldn't stand seeing the people she cared for dying because she brought misfortune to them, who ended up telling her even before dying that being able to see her was their greatest fortune."

Kamijou didn't know what to say.

Kanzaki was now affiliated with the Anglican Church, which meant that she had left the Amakusa. Even though she had been born with the highest position and was admired by everyone, she had chosen to leave everything to prevent the people who believed in her from suffering the misfortune. In order to protect the people around her, she could only suppress her feelings of wanting to be with them and choose to be alone.

In the end, the people who could be with her—

Were those as strong as Necessarius, a unique organization that wouldn't be affected by luck or no luck.

What kind of feeling was that? Kamijou wondered.

Kamijou really regretted causing Kanzaki to recall all of that; he really regretted talking about his misfortune in front of her so casually.

At that moment, Tsuchimikado noticed it, and said, "But Kami-yan, you don't really have to mind about this. Nee-chin wanted this. She got hurt by her own heart, what does it have to do with you?"

Tsuchimikado waved his hand.

"She's just throwing a kid's tantrum, you don't have to worry."

Though Tsuchimikado was chuckling as he said that, Kamijou's melancholy wasn't eased.

A short silence.

There wasn't a single sound on the streets, only the occasional sound of dogs barking, similar to that of a dog's bark at midnight. At that moment, the sound of a train moving far away could be heard.

After a while, Kamijou looked around on that empty street.

"Speaking of which, why is Kanzaki so slow? Nee-chin has the ability to break through tanks from the front even if she got caught. However, though nee-chin's one of the ten strongest magicians in London, her magic isn't cautious. She's not the best in setting up boundaries, so maybe she ended up spending more time."

"...Oh ya, I'm still not used to the fact that you're a magician. Does that mean that you're a priest, and will wear priest robes?"

"Undercover policemen don't wear uniforms. I'm not too familiar with clerical work, and my Bible is all dusty. My basis of magic isn't Kabbalah, but a mix of Taoism and a Japanese Onmyodo."

"...Onmyodo...that feels Japanese."

"Yeah, but Kabbalah and Onmyodo are rather similar." Tsuchimikado nodded twice, and continued, "Like for example, the symbols that represent the 5 elements; both East and West use the Pentacle. Also, everything is designated by a color and a position, and when setting a magic array, there will be four guardian deities set at the four positions, but in the Western world, they're called the four archangels, and in the East, they're the four gods nya."

"Oh..."

To Kamijou, those were things of the unknown, so he just said, "Unbelievable."

"There's nothing unbelievable, these aren't coincidences. The one who established Onmyodo was Abe no Seimei during the Heian period, and during that time, there were a lot of foreign stuff brought in through the Silk Road, and I suppose Onmyodo was affected to an extent. Even that Onmyodo classic Kinugyokutoshū was passed here from China. If you're interested, you can ask Index for this book if you want."

Tsuchimikado then said in a self-mocking tone.

"But I specialize in feng shui. There's a difference in reading the landscape through Eastern and Western means."

"Fengshui? Like Kobayashi-sensei?"

Kamijou had seen a job called 'feng shui master' in RPGs. So that was his job, right?

"Ah, Kami-yan let me make this clear, the world originally doesn't have a profession called a fengshui master. In China, the one who's supposed to do this is the Taoise priest, and of course, here in Japan, it's the Onmyoji's job."

Tsuchimikado lifted his fingers and started to count.

"The feng shui's job is just one of it. Feng shui master, divination master, alchemist, curse specialist, prayer master, waterclock master; these are jobs that are derived from Taoism and Onmyodo."

"Oh...it's like how a part of Shaolin martial arts got passed to Okinawa and ended up being karate?"

"It's a similar feeling. The way in Taoism is to exert air into other objects, and by the same principle, using it on the ground and earth will form feng shui. In a scientific point of view, it's the Gaia theory. Basically, it's a theory of treating the earth as a life form."

Tsuchimikado then pondered for a while, and added on.

"And among which, I specialize in the black arts. Basically, it's 'creating a water road' nya."

"Creating a water road?"

"Exactly what it says, creating a water road. By using the water to create a large magic array to protect a castle or a city. It's not rare to see water roads formed as magic arrays. Though it's unrelated to feng shui, the water capital of Italy is one. It's said that at the end of World War II, the Japanese intended to link all the air-raid shelters to create a large water road array, too bad it failed nya."

Tsuchimikado seemed to recall the past.

"I used to specialize in setting traps by using water roads. Actually, that's what an Onmyoji does, to secretly summon a god far away where people can't see it, or to conceal myself by using the surrounding magic arrays the enemy set up. The Heian period people feared Onmyodo, not because how strong it was, but because it's a despicable, heinous, cunning, shameless taboo that's used to corner people from the darkness."

As they continued to talk, they saw Kanzaki moving among the shadows quickly and returning back to Kamijou and the rest.

She looked calm, almost without any emotion.

"The Boundary of Forbidden Wires is activated. The assault forces surrounding Kamijou's house should be treating an empty house three hundred meters away as Kamijou's house and shifted their perimeter."

"Okay, then we can mess up Kami-yan's house without anyone looking nya."

Tsuchimikado casually said that as he stepped out. Misha and Kanzaki followed him, with only Kamijou left stunned.

Kanzaki turned around and asked, "Let's go. Or do you intend to stay here and let us handle Hino?"

"Ah...oh..."

Kamijou replied and frantically followed Kanzaki, who was waiting for him. He

chased up to Tsuchimikado's back. While running, he wondered, should I apologize to her for making her remember something this unpleasant?

(...No, she'll end up remembering that again.)

Since it was not a good memory, it was best not to make her remember. Kamijou shook his head. Kanzaki stared at Kamijou in a puzzled manner, and in order to avoid Kanzaki's gaze, Kamijou hastened his steps.

## Part 6

The Kamijou nameplate was stuck on the concrete wall near the entrance--swinging together with the mailbox and the doorbell.

Kamijou and company were hiding behind the hedge opposite the Kamijou's house.

It was an ordinary looking two story wooden house.

But in this hot summer, all the windows were shut, and the thick curtains were pulled up. One could tell that something was not right. Though he had lost his memory, Kamijou should more or less have a feeling a nostalgia, and on seeing this house that was full of evil energy, he could only talk of those tragic cases like family violence or girls being imprisoned.

And in truth, it wasn't like anyone could say that this feeling wasn't right.

In this huge house that rejected sunlight, there was truly a convict who was on death row, having killed 28 people on the excuse of demon worship and sacrificed them, and caused the world to be involved in the crisis called Angel Fall.

From behind the hedge, Kanzaki peered over from the curtain that was blocking

the window at the second level, and whispered, "Hm, we can't tell where Hino is from here. If Stiyl were here, maybe he could use the heat source to detect Hino's location."

Kanzaki's tone seemed to indicate a sense of pity,

"But since the windows are shut tight, I suppose Hino can't tell that we're already nearby. If we want to strike, we have to do it fast. Where's Kamijou's house keys?"

"Over here nya!"

For some reason, Tsuchimikado actually pulled out a silver key from his pocket. Kamijou frantically searched his own pocket, and found the key missing. It seemed like Tsuchimikado had nabbed Kamijou's key, but the time when and method with which he did it was still a mystery.

Kanzaki seemed to be irritated by this meaningless act Tsuchimikado made, and she said, "Alright, we'll set up a diversion. Tsuchimikado, go by the front, and make as much noise as you can. Once Kreutzev and I hear you, we'll sneak in from another direction."

"Got it. Misha should have no problems with this, right?"

Tsuchimikado asked Misha, who only responded with a "My first response: Definite". She then pulled out a saw, and without anyone's assistance, she jumped up to the porch above the first level and hid at a small window next to the second level.

While Kamijou was still reeling from shock, he saw Kanzaki jump up in front of her. Without any assistance, she actually jumped over Misha, who was on the first level porch, and silently landed on the second level roof. She then moved to the other side of the roof, the part that was facing the yard.

That was too ridiculous, completely illogical. That was like a child asking how to run faster and an adult answering seriously with 'put an engine on your body'. It was too illogical that even common sense was denied.

After Kanzaki and Misha left with a to-be-expected look, Tsuchimikado walked out from the hedge.

Being left behind, Kamijou asked Tsuchimikado, "A...oi! What about me?"

"Kanzaki nee-chin didn't mention you, so that means you better stay here, nya?" Tsuchimikado turned around and continued, "You just saw it, Kami-yan. There are 3 magicians that have superhuman physical abilities, so don't worry."

"Bu...but...two of them are girls."

Hearing Kamijou's words, Tsuchimikado cackled like a hyena as he stared through the blue shades at Kamijou.

"Please, Kami-yan, Kanzaki nee-chin is a Saint with the Stigma. Can that weapon who has the power of a Saint be considered a girl?"

"...Saint weapon?"

"That's right, Kami-yan. Didn't I explain the Idol Theory to you yesterday? Though the crosses on the roofs of churches are fake, as long as the shape is the same, they can obtain a certain amount of power."

Tsuchimikado explained this really quickly while noticing Kanzaki and Misha's movements.

"The same theory can be applied to duplicate items of God. Humans are created in God's image, so it's possible to infuse humans with God's blessing. Of course, only a few people have the privilege to be humans similar to God. Someone like Kanzaki nee-chin, who's naturally born with the blessing of God, has the proof of a Saint: the Stigma. Once she releases the power of the Stigma, she can, for a short while, gain power that far exceeds a human. Right now, Kanzaki nee-chin can take down an entire city on her own, you know?"

Tsuchimikado said his goodbyes to Kamijou and hid beside the main door, inserting the silver key into the keyhole.

Being left alone behind the hedge, Kamijou started to wonder.

Was it really good to leave everything to them? It was true that those magicians were fighting experts. Recalling the overwhelming power Misha had displayed yesterday in defeating Hino Jinsaku, he felt that there was nothing much to worry about.

However...

Did those people really realize how hard it was to fight in the darkness?

In an indoor battle in the darkness, the most terrifying thing wasn't attacks that came from the enemy, but to have their own people kill each other. Two figures who met each other face to face in the darkness or that popped out from a corner may end up attacking each other accidentally, and that was the scariest thing. Though Kamijou wasn't an expert in night fighting, when he was fighting on the alleys, he knew that if he had to fight when he couldn't escape, he had to choose an empty space, for there may be an ambush in the dark corners.

And Hino Jinsaku would definitely understand that.

He should know how to let the enemies fight against each other in the darkness. Maybe the sneak attack last night caused Kamijou to overestimate Hino's abilities, but he had deliberately pulled up the curtains to create a dark space. It was a logical guess that his aim was to let his enemies kill each other.

(Cheh...if that's the case, the stronger the companions, the worse it is!)

Kamijou frantically dashed to the entrance, where Tsuchimikado was. He nearly knocked into a short artificial bird nest near the door as he rushed over.

"Wait for me, Tsuchimikado!"

Tsuchimikado cursed, but there was no time to argue. He softly, but firmly said to Kamijou, "...I'm going in. Kami-yan, follow me from behind. But don't think that it's a safe zone. Most importantly, watch your back."

Kamijou also knew that there wasn't going to be a safe zone. He wanted to bicker back like a child, but he saw that Tsuchimikado had already turned the key in the keyhole.

With a short inhale, Tsuchimikado forcefully slammed the door open.

BAM! The loud cannon-like opening of the door echoed throughout the empty residence.

(Uu...!)

Looking into the door, Kamijou nearly shouted out.

Hot air flowed out from the dark interior of the door, and the sealed space of hot air had a strange stench in it. It was like putting a rotting crab into a sink, and causing the water in the sink to let out such a stench as it stimulated Kamijou's nose and eyes.

From within the darkness 'zz--', the sound of a tire letting out air could be heard.

The wide open rectangular door looked like some mysterious sink.

At that moment, Tsuchimikado didn't intend to do any meaningless deal. He silently headed forward, and Kamijou followed Tsuchimikado from behind as he entered that man-made darkness.

The door was like a spring as it closed from behind Kamijou.

The hot air surrounded Kamijou, as if he had entered a beast's lair.

Though the curtains and windows blocked out the light, it was not completely dark. There were small gaps in between the thick curtains. If he had used tape to seal all the windows and curtains up, maybe Hino could have created complete darkness. But he hadn't.

(However...)

It was because it was not a complete darkness, but a dark space that had some light, that one would have a bad feeling about it. Because they could see the silhouette, an ordinary umbrella could be seen as a squatting person. If someone suddenly appeared from behind a wall, it was likely that they would attack before they could even identify the person. The nekotama on the shoe shelf and the red mailbox shaped decoration formed a scary black figure, and the wooden sword gift that was stabbed at the umbrella rack looked like an arm that had been severed. If they opened the floor on the corridor, there may have been a rotting corpse underneath. If they pulled the wallpaper down, they may have seen an old coffin hammered in.

There were huge South American masks, Moai statues and other religious decorations all over the place. Those should be what Touya had bought when he went overseas.

Upon entering the room, there was a glass door on the right side, and the front lead to the second level. There were also two doors beside the stairs. One of them had a lock, it should be the toilet, right?

(Where's Kanzaki and Misha...?)

Kamijou looked up; there was no sound at all. Of course, if he could hear their voices here, it would be meaningless for them to sneak in.

Tsuchimikado continued to walk on.

He headed toward the toilet, opened the door silently, and peered inside. He then closed the door; seemed like Hino wasn't inside. Tsuchimikado then opened the door beside the toilet, and this time, Kamijou followed him.

On opening the door, the ripping sound that was like a balloon losing air got even louder, and the stench that irritated the nose got even stronger.

It was the changing room.

They could somewhat see the silhouette of the washing machines, clothes dryer and face-washing sink. There was a frosted glass sliding door beside, and it was not hard to imagine that it linked to the bathroom.

Tsuchimikado pulled the frosted glass door open and looked inside.

The bathroom seemed to have become a warm and humid place. There was a plastic turtle on the ground, and it was likely something that could float in a bathtub. The entire place didn't look like a bathroom, but rather, a basement for imprisoning children.

Tsuchimikado looked into the empty bathtub.

Kamijou turned back to look at the changing room. The mirror at the washing sink was pitch black like a sea at night. There was hair wax, T-shaped shavers and Western chess-shaped glass bottles arranged on it. It seemed like Touya chose all those overseas gifts based on personal liking?

Tsuchimikado pushed Kamijou aside and headed to the other end of the changing room. That place seemed to be the kitchen.

(...Hold on...)

Kamijou had a bad feeling about this. A strange stench was carried by the air flowing out of the kitchen. The sharp stench that was getting stronger as they headed to the kitchen was...

"...(Tsuchimikado! Hurry up and get away!)"

Kamijou thought that he had held his voice low, but unexpectedly, his voice in the darkness was extremely loud. The unexpected volume caused Kamijou's heart to beat unnaturally.

But Tsuchimikado didn't say anything and he gave Kamijou a look "What's up?"

"...(It's gas! This is the smell of gas! That guy turned on the gas valve!)"

Hearing Kamijou say that, Tsuchimikado seemed shocked and his shoulders trembled.

Maybe Hino had already discovered that Kamijou and company wanted to enter and had already escaped. He may have intended to set fire from the outside and blow up Kamijou and company (or maybe Hino thought that the intruders were assault forces). Kamijou took one step back after another and tried to leave the kitchen. At that moment, Tsuchimikado may have felt that it was dangerous to stay there, and he took a step out to where Kamijou was.

*Suddenly, in the blink of an eye.*

*Behind Tsuchimikado—in the kitchen, a skinny figure silently appeared behind him.*

"Tsu...!"

Just as Kamijou wanted to shout, that person raised the sickle and hacked down at Tsuchimikado with a terrifying arc.

Who could have expected that?

In this house that was filled with gas, the person who turned the gas on had actually hidden in the most dangerous place.

Having been caught in this psychological blind spot, Tsuchimikado still hadn't realized the death presence behind him.

The sickle stabbed down towards Tsuchimikado's head--

"!"

--In the nick of time, Kamijou managed to knock Tsuchimikado aside. Even though the changing room was extremely narrow, a meter to the side was all they needed to touch the wall, the distance was more than enough to evade the knife.

The blade swept through the darkness, and Kamijou, who knocked Tsuchimikado aside, felt a sharp burning pain on the wrist.

He had gotten hit, but the wound was shallow. Kamijou ignored it as he stared straight ahead. Hino Jinsaku raised the sickle back up again and attacked Kamijou's face from the front.

Facing the silver knife that was coming down, Kamijou intended to grab something beside him and block that strike. But on reaching out his right hand, he didn't manage to grab anything, and a nightmarish thought suddenly appeared in Kamijou's mind.

Even though it hadn't completely filled the place, the gas there was thick enough.

If he used something hard to block a blade, the sparks that flew off could explode the entire changing room!

"You...bastard!"

Standing besides him, Tsuchimikado frantically kicked Hino's sickle (or rather, the hand that was holding it) and prevented it from stabbing Kamijou's neck. The sickle flew out and landed on the washing machine. Kamijou was terrified, but it was a good thing that no sparks flew out.

Great chance. Kamijou intended to slam into Hino's abdomen and render him immobile.

But at that moment, Hino opened the mouth with saliva and blood all over it.

"GYAHHHHHH!!!!"

He screamed like a beast. Seeing Hino's open mouth that was filled with saliva, Kamijou hesitated due to fear. At that moment, Hino suddenly charged past Kamijou, grabbed the sickle on the washing machine and dashed out of the room.

"DON'T YOU RUN AWAY!"

Tsuchimikado shouted as he pursued Hino from behind. At that moment, Kamijou finally got free from the momentary freeze. He hesitated for a while, wondering whether he should follow Tsuchimikado, but finally decided to run into the kitchen.

The smell of gas in the kitchen was too terrifying. It was thick enough that static electricity on the slightest rubbing of clothes could cause an explosion. The microwave oven that had three tiger toys on it, the metallic fridge that had a wooden badge on it, the basin with multicolored glass bottles placed there...there were metallic objects and electrical appliances that could trigger a spark all over, and that caused Kamijou to tremble.

(Anyway...got to shut the gas! I don't want to get blown up in my own house!)

In the darkness, Kamijou found the gas stove, which had an aluminum hood covering it. Looking closer, he could see that the gas pipe had been pulled out. Kamijou carefully reached his hand out, as if cutting the red wire on a bomb, and gently twisted the gas valve shut.

The terrifying ripping sound stopped.

No explosion, Kamijou heaved a sigh of relief. He then opened the back door, and the summer sunlight shone in, causing Kamijou's eyes to feel irritated, as he was used to the darkness. His skin may have felt the poisonous gas flow away. The outdoor summer air that he had always thought to be harmful to his own body never felt so good.

At that moment...

The sound of a man's hoarse voice and frantic footsteps could be heard.

Kamijou turned back to look. The fighting sounds seemed to come from the darkness deep inside the living room. It must be Hino and Tsuchimikado. Footsteps could clearly be heard from the second level; it seemed like Kanzaki and Misha felt that there was no need to keep their footsteps' volume down.

Kamijou frantically dashed out of the kitchen and into the living room.

The living room was wide. There was a large television set at the wall, and there was a short table suitably far away. The floor had a thin-furred carpet. There was a cupboard at the wall opposite the television, and there was excess space beside it that was used to hold an old jukebox.

Tsuchimikado and Hino were standing between the television and the short table. Hino was waving the sickle crazily, while Tsuchimikado was not blocking as he completely dodged and waited for a chance to fight back. There was an ashtray, a metallic tabletop clock and other items beside Tsuchimikado that he could use to block, but it seemed like Tsuchimikado didn't dare to randomly create sparks for fear of igniting the gas.

(Don't tell me...that's part of his plan...)

Kamijou again realized the terror Hino was capable of. Using the act of skimming on the verge of death to psychologically limit the enemy's attacks. He had never seen such a method of fighting before.

In that situation, Kamijou was unable to help at all. If he was to randomly grab a weapon and charge, he may end up crashing and igniting the gas. If he didn't use any weapons, Kamijou wasn't confident that he could dodge that serial killer Hino's knife which seemed to have a mind of its own.

Tsuchimikado seemed to notice what Kamijou was thinking.

"DON'T COME OVER, KAMI-YAN!"

The moment Tsuchimikado shouted that, Hino's attention was diverted onto Kamijou.

But at that moment, while Hino was distracted, Tsuchimikado charged in at Hino. So this was Tsuchimikado's plan.

"!"

Completely shocked, Hino frantically tried to wave the knife, but it was too late. Almost sticking to Hino, Tsuchimikado twisted his abdomen and swung his arm with all his weight. However, he was not using his fists to punch like an ordinary fighter, but an elbow at Hino's chest. This hit that was infused with all of a person's weight could break ribs and pierce through a heart. It was a complete killer blow.

And Hino Jinsaku.

Facing that hammer-like blow that was about to hit his unguarded chest.

Hino actually used his fractured left arm to block it.

*GUH!! The sound of teeth biting a rotten fruit could be heard.*

Kamijou couldn't help but close his eyes and he turned his head away in reflex. Some warm fluids spurted onto his face.

Kamijou started to wonder if Hino Jinsaku was crazy.

This serious sense of disgust overwhelmed Kamijou. An irritating feeling climbed up his fingers.

"GYAH!!"

Kamijou heard Hino cry out in delight. That was Hino's psychological tactic. Even though he understood that, he would still turn away on reflex. Hino intended to use that to seal Tsuchimikado's movements.

Ah! The sound of the sickle swing ripped through the air.

"TSUCHIMIKADO!"

Unable to face this terrifying image, Kamijou shouted out.

BAM!

What rang out wasn't the knife hitting, but the impact of an elbow.

"Eh?"

Puzzled, Kamijou inadvertently opened his eyes.

Tsuchimikado wasn't afraid at all. He didn't turn his head away, he wasn't stiff. he stared at the enemy straight in the face and slammed the hammer-like elbow straight into the enemy's face.

"What?"

Tsuchimikado casually retorted.

Tsuchimikado was grinning, and not sadistically or psychotically. He was just smiling normally and naturally like a child.

Psychological attacks didn't work on him.

They had no effect on him at all.

Having suffered an elbow strike, Hino's body felt like it had been slammed by a metal bat. He didn't touch the floor as he flew two meters away. Having been seriously injured, Hino continued to roll on the floor until he hit the cupboard.

"Alright, time to ask him some questions nya."

Tsuchimikado bared his fangs and grins.

The eyes behind the blue shades were grinning like a beast.

Hino seemed to be conscious, but he didn't have any ability to fight back now. His body had already lost all balance, and his limbs could merely tremble. He looked like a dead bug now.

This unexpected ending caused Kamijou to almost stop thinking.

At that moment, Kanzaki and Misha finally descended down to the first level.

"Are you alright, Tsuchimikado?"

After saying that, Kanzaki frowned.

"...What's this smell?"

"Ah..."

Kamijou remembered that gas was heavier than air, so Kanzaki and Misha, who were on the second level, didn't smell it.

After Kamijou explained about the gas, Kanzaki looked somewhat nervous.

"We'll take care of the interrogation of Hino Jinsaku, can you please open the windows?"

On first glance, Kanzaki's proposal seemed logical, but Kamijou still asked, "Oi, why don't we bring him away from here first?"

"I intend to interrogate him here until we get the information we need. I don't want to give him any chance to get away."

"Oh."

Though Kamijou didn't really agree with this, he still nodded his head.

But since they agreed to do so, they should scatter the gas out of the house. It would be terrible if Hino gave up and tried to blow the place up. Kamijou walked around every single corner and opened all the windows. The whole house was filled with foreign exotic gifts. That strange habit really dumbfounded Kamijou, but now was not the time to worry about it.

After opening all the windows, Kamijou returned back to the living room. All the curtains and windows were open, and this wasn't a dark hellish place, but an ordinary living room.

"...I don't know..."

The moment he walked into the living room, he saw the limp Hino lying beside the cupboard, saying,

"What are you saying...what Angel Fall...I don't know...Angel-sama, I don't understand what these people are talking about. Please tell me...it's weird...it's weird...why did it end up like this..."

Hino continued to mutter to himself softly, as if he was playing a record that was extended due to the heat. It was like he was talking to himself, yet as if he was trying to attract the other magician's attention.

Tsuchimikado revealed a happy yet mysterious smile.

"Alright, we'll begin with our inquisition. Remember, if you want to surrender, tell us Angel Fall's ritual place. Which part should I start with? How about I dislocate the elbow joints, right? Your arms can go long when your joints are broken, but lets go with a centimeter at a time."

That casual tone Tsuchimikado was using made Kamijou feel numb. Misha was holding onto the chisel and the saw as she stood beside Tsuchimikado. They were supposed to be tools for carpentry, but the moment the timing and location changed, they became such terrifying weapons.

But Hino's attitude didn't change.

His weak and limp limbs didn't move at all, as Hino continued to mutter,

[illegible]

The flat monotone crept Kamijou out.

At that moment, the index finger that was lying limp on the floor suddenly started to crawl like a caterpillar.

The finger was moving on its own, as if the wrist muscles got hit with an electrical current. The finger continued to write what seemed to be words, but as there was no ink, he couldn't form words.

Hino looked happy as he stroked the carpet with the finger.

"Ahh, Angel-sama, Angel-sama..."

The mouth full of saliva continued to utter that mysterious chant.

Kamijou inadvertently asked, "Angel-sama?"

"Yes, Angel-sama...always lives within me, Angel-sama...will always answer my problems, Angel-sama, definitely won't be wrong, Angel-sama, I will earn happiness by serving you always..."

Hino continued to say this as his hand trembled, as if his hand got spasms. And Kanzaki was starting to worry about Hino's hand.

"That's right, Angel-sama will always be right, so I turned the gas on, Angel-sama said, that if I can use the ambulance, I can use the chance to escape..."

Kamijou saw the words Hino Jinsaku carved into his own abdomen through his own knife: CALL AN AMBULANCE.

"...It translates to 'Call an ambulance', nya?"

Looking down at where Kamijou was looking, Tsuchimikado commented as he stared at Hino's abdomen.

I see, Kamijou thought. The people who were supposed to rush into the house wasn't Kamijou and company, but the assault forces. The assault forces who were wearing full armor and helmets.

Hino Jinsaku originally intended to hide in the bathroom or someplace where it was safer, and once the assault team entered, he would blow the gas up and grab their equipment. He would then act as an injured person and let them lift him onto the ambulance...and then use that chance to get away.

But as for the Angel-sama that Hino had been talking about, Kamijou felt that something was not right.

Hino continued to write on the floor with such strong force that his fingers seemed like they were about to break.

Feeling wary, Kanzaki said in a loud voice, "Stop what you're doing, Hino Jinsaku. This isn't an idle threat, I'll draw the sword if you don't listen."

Kanzaki's voice was as cold as the blade, but Hino's hand continued to move.

Continue, continue, he continued to write on the floor.

"U...Uwah...I, I can't stop! Angel-sama couldn't stop!"



But Hino himself seemed to be afraid of Kanzaki.

Hino looked like he was about to cry, and yet about to laugh. Only the right hand was writing like a monster.

(...?)

Kamijou suddenly had a weird feeling.

He seemed to have seen this before, no, heard of this before.

No, it was during lessons.

During the summer remedials, Komoe-sensei had mentioned it during lessons.

What he remembered, was research about whether a person's body could have two different powers—

"—That's right, split personalities!"

Assuming that a person's consciousness was a network; if this person didn't want to remember a memory he couldn't endure and sealed off a part of the network, it was called Schizophrenia. And if the sealed part decided to split up and work as an independent network, it was called a dissociative identity disorder—which was also commonly known as a split personality disorder.

The TV programs had mentioned it before.

Hino Jinsaku was once diagnosed with split personality disorder, and there was even a mass debate about whether he should be prosecuted.

The split personality need not be like those depicted in manga or movies, where personality A and personality B were separate. Sometimes, the two personalities could interfere with one another.

For example, there was one case of a patient with dual personalities telling the doctor that when he faces the mirror, he would find the mirror talking back to himself. But after the doctor's investigation, the result was that the patient was just talking to himself. In other words, personality A didn't realize that his mouth was being controlled by personality B.

Maybe Hino's right hand was the same thing?

If Hino was a split personality patient, his right hand would have another personality controlling it.

"That's right, Angel Fall's side effect is to switch the inside and the appearance, right?"

Kamijou asked Kanzaki.

"What about people with split personalities? Do they count as having an appearance and two insides?"

"Eh?"

Kanzaki stared at Kamijou.

"What I mean is," Kamijou stared at Kanzaki's eyes and said, "Is there a possibility that Hino Jinsaku's 'personality A' and 'personality B' got switched?"

On hearing this, everyone was stunned.

"If it's just the two personalities with the appearance of Hino Jinsaku changing with each other, he should still be Hino Jinsaku to others, right?"

Kamijou pondered for a while, and then continued.

"If that's really the case, Hino Jinsaku really got affected by Angel Fall, and is not the real culprit."

Speechless.

The magicians all remained stiff as they heard Kamijou's declaration.

"What's the answer? Do people with split personalities count as having two insides? Or are they two personalities in the same inside?"

"..."

Kanzaki couldn't answer, and could only turn to Tsuchimikado and Misha. However, nobody could tell her the answer. Ever since Angel Fall occurred,

nobody ever considered the special case of a split personality patient.

At this moment, the person who broke the silence was actually Hino Jinsaku.

"STOP, STOP, STOP BLABBERING! YOU...WHY ARE YOU SAYING THE SAME THING AS THAT WEIRD DOCTOR!? ANGEL-SAMA REALLY EXISTS! ANGEL-SAMA REALLY EXISTS! WHY DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND THIS!?"

To Hino, having the existence of Angel-sama denied seemed to be much more painful than getting his own life taken away. Besides, Hino would even kill without hesitation for this Angel-sama.

But his words couldn't prove anything.

Those words ended up making Kanzaki and the rest even more confused.

"Did...did a doctor tell you that? Your Angel-sama was once diagnosed as just a simple split personality!?"

"UUU...!!!"

Hearing that question, Hino trembled.

"DON'T, DON'T BE LIKE THIS! DON'T LOOK AT ME LIKE THIS!! THAT DOCTOR DOESN'T KNOW ANYTHING!!! HE DOESN'T KNOW ANYTHING!!!!"

Hino continued to tremble like a child, and Kamijou inadvertently turned to look away.

Though it was a killer in front of him, Kamijou had a weird sense of guilt within him.

"Seems like I'm right." Kamijou sighed heavily and said, "Hino Jinsaku is a patient with split personality. He wasn't switched, but has his personality A and personality B switched about."

Kamijou bitterly grimaced as he made this conclusion.

"—In other words, Hino Jinsaku isn't the culprit who triggered Angel Fall."

## Part 7

Everyone was stunned.

Hino, who was unrelated to the entire case, lost consciousness either due to the pain or because his Angel-sama was believed to be false.

Now, all their trails in tracking down the culprit of Angel Fall were dead-ends. They had wasted so much time. They didn't know how to handle this, and they didn't know how much time they could use to grasp around.

"If Hino's not the culprit behind Angel Fall, who is?"

"How would I know...?"

Kamijou also didn't know what to say. They had no clues at all. Not knowing what to do, Kamijou and company could only stand around.

At that moment...

"Eh?"

Not daring to look at Kanzaki, Kamijou managed to catch a glimpse that something was not right. However, he didn't know what that feeling was.

Kamijou looked at the cupboard Hino was lying at and walked over.

The things in the cupboard were plentiful. Touya, who often went overseas to work, seemed to have placed his stash of all the meaningless items here.

The only non-collectible item here was a photo frame. Though Kamijou had lost his memory, he seemed to have moved into Academy City after he graduated

from kindergarten, so the people in the photo should be the young Kamijou and his young parents.

"This is..."

The switched phenomenon wasn't just limited to the bodies, even the photos were the same. Aogami Pierce could fit in perfectly into Index's nun's habit because of this. The clothes, shoes sizes, fingerprints, bioinfo, photos, film, everything related to that person would be switched.

The photo in this frame had become weird because of Angel Fall. Kamijou had managed to use his Imagine Breaker ability to escape the effects, so the image of Kamijou still remained as his young self, but the photo of his mother had become Index, and the photo of his father—

—The photo of his father.

"...Hang on."

Kamijou muttered. Looking at where Kamijou's looking, the other magicians seemed to realize this.

What about Touya?

Why wasn't Kamijou Touya switched?

The topic they had just talked about seemed to be a distant memory.

*“—The only one not affected by it is this boy in the middle of the commotion.”*

*“—In this situation, isn't it reasonable to suspect that this boy is the culprit?”*

This suspicious point started to help Kamijou remember the numerous suspicious points.

*“—According to the results of the investigation, this strange phenomenon seems to be caused by you at the center, Kami-yan.”*

*“—However, you're unaffected even though you're at the center.”*

The numerous suspicious points headed towards the same direction and formed a

problem.

*“—Kanzaki and I were lucky.”*

*“—Under the double protection of the distance and the barrier, we managed to escape.”*

Yeah, Kamijou thought. Even if they were magicians, even most of the experts of the magical world couldn't escape Angel Fall.

"Don't tell me...dad..."

Kamijou let out those words, which made Kanzaki frown.

"What are you saying? Are you telling me that the person wasn't switched and remained the same?"

Kamijou didn't know how to answer that question.

But on thinking through it, Kanzaki's question was logical. Since Angel Fall changed all the photos and records, even if they wanted to find the information of person A after it happened, they would only find the information of person B that was switched. So even if Kamijou Touya's information wasn't switched, Kanzaki and the rest would have thought that this was another person that got switched.

At that moment, Misha, who was standing beside Kamijou, sighed coldly.

"My first response: Found the answer. Target defined. Just need to confirm the correctness of this answer... My personal opinion: I think that's a no-brainer."

After saying that, she leapt out of the open adjacent window, into the yard, and vanished without a trace.

"WAIT! MISHA KREUTZEV! WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY THAT!?"

Kanzaki frantically shouted, but Misha had already disappeared.

The target.

Kamijou just saw Kamijou Touya's photo and said that.

"...Tsuchimikado."

Kamijou took a deep breath, and asked, "In this Angel Fall, is it really rare to see someone like me not affected?"

"It's not just rare, it's just you only."

Tsuchimikado peered through the blue shades.

"Even with me who set up the magic array, or like nee-chin who just so happened to be in the deepest part of St. George Cathedral or Mont Saint-Michel Monastery, we couldn't get away from the effects of Angel Fall completely. It's like me knowing that I'm Tsuchimikado Motoharu, but other people view me as Hitotsui Hajime."

That's right, that was why they had thought Kamijou Touma was the culprit behind Angel Fall.

Everyone in the world should have been affected by Angel Fall, but only one person hadn't been affected by this huge magic at all.

This was the answer.

The person who wasn't affected by Angel Fall was the culprit.

Kamijou again stared at the photo frame on the cupboard.

There was a family photo of three.

Kamijou Shiina was switched as Index, no problems.

Kamijou Touma wasn't switched because of the Imagine Breaker. That was no problem as well.

However...

Kamijou Touya wasn't switched.

Of course, Touya didn't have the Imagine Breaker ability like Kamijou. if everyone in the world had to be affected by Angel Fall, and this Angel Fall was magic that affected everyone, it would be like a computer virus, only the creator

was exempt.

"Damn it..."

Kamijou Touma didn't want to admit it.

But this was the only possibility.

"DAMN IT!"

The culprit was Kamijou Touya.

And Kamijou Touma hated himself for finding out.

## **Part 8**

Angel Fall was a large scale spell that required a boundary or a magic array.

Thus, once they broke that magic array, they could stop Angel Fall.

"...Go back, Kami-yan."

But Tsuchimikado told Kamijou to return without even checking the house for a magic array.

"I'll check this place. Kami-yan, head back with nee-chin to protect Touya-san."

(Protect?)

Kamijou didn't understand, so he frowned.

Those people were affiliated with the Anglican Church. Up till now, their reason for working together with Kamijou was just to prevent Angel Fall from activating. Right now, since they knew that the culprit was Kamijou's relative,

why would they choose to help Kamijou?

Facing Kamijou's doubt, Tsuchimikado just grimaced.

"Don't look down on us, Kami-yan. Our goal is just to prevent Angel Fall from activating. Of course, it's best that we don't kill anyone nya."

Changing his tone, Tsuchimikado then grumbled.

"That Misha's too hasty, not everything can be settled by killing nya."

Settling this by killing.

Those words spooked Kamijou.

Misha wouldn't hold back when attacking the enemy. Not only did she break Hino Jinsaku's wrist, even Kamijou, who had been suspected, had a saw put to his neck.

Did she really intend to do the same thing to Kamijou Touya?

Even though she didn't know why Touya must activate Angel Fall?

Must she really swing the hammer or crowbar at Kamijou Touma's father without holding back?

"Damn it. What kind of a joke is this..."

She definitely wouldn't hesitate.

Misha Kreutzev. She had come there for that purpose.

She had originally intended to kill the culprit behind the activation of Angel Fall to solve this problem.

"...What kind of sick joke is this, DAMN IT!!!!"

Kamijou roared.

But the person who should be taking this rage wasn't there.

# **Chapter 3: The Descent of the Angel that Harms This World**

## **Part 1**

On the taxi ride back, Kamijou didn't utter a single word to Kanzaki.

Right now, he was thinking about Misha. Comparing running to taking a car, there was no contest. Kamijou and Kanzaki should be faster than Misha in returning to the resort. However, Misha might hitch a ride on the way back.

"..."

Kamijou tiredly closed his eyes.

While closing his eyelids, Kamijou seemed to see the photo that had been switched and became so weird.

It seemed like that wasn't the only photo that had been switched. The photo album that was hidden in a certain corner should be the same. Of course, that went for all the photo albums in the world.

Even if it was a faded eight centimeter film that was filmed during elementary school.

Even if it was a greeting card with a photo of a baby on it.

Even if it was a couple who tried to squeeze into the small image and kept their bodies tightly together as they took the photo from a camera.

Those should be important memories to everyone.

They were memories that couldn't be stained or twisted.

(Why must you do this...damn dad...)

Kamijou sighed heavily.

It seemed like even the sighing voice was forcing Kamijou to focus.

The sky was already dyed orange when Kamijou and Kanzaki returned to the Wadatsumi resort.

The color looked like fresh blood or flames to Kamijou, and he shuddered.

Misha...she's not here yet, right?

Since Touya was the culprit, someone would come to take his life.

And it wasn't the fangs of the devil, but an ally of justice.

Even so, being worried about Touya, Kamijou rushed into the resort frantically. No matter whether it was good or evil, those came secondary. Kamijou was simply worried for his father. However, that thought landed him on the evil side, which really caused Kamijou to hate it.

"Eh? Onii-chan, where did you go?"

On entering the house, he saw Mikoto lying in front of the electrical fan and licking the ice popsicle while watching the television.

(Lucky...)

Kamijou thought. At least that meant that Misha, who knew the truth, didn't take someone as a hostage.

Mikoto, who was lying on the floor, didn't seem like she intended to get up. She puffed her cheeks and said to Kamijou,

"Onii-chan! You disappeared all of a sudden! Everyone was so worried about you! Everyone stopped playing and went to look for you! Since you wanted to go out, you should have told someone or left a note—"

"Dad? Where's he?"

Having her words interrupted suddenly, Mikoto widened her eyes in shock. Kamijou didn't know how he looked like now, but he knew that his voice sounded like he was about to cry at any moment.

"He should be at the seaside? I don't know the exact location, everyone went to look for you. Ah, I'm not lazing around, I'm in charge of contact. Onii-chan, you better say sorry to everyone. Really."

*Oh.* Kamijou nodded his head.

Then, Kamijou was about to face his own father. Maybe he should have apologized about this.

"It's my job now. You just need to stay here."

Kanzaki said with a cautious tone,

"I'll protect Touya-shi and the rest, so..."

"I refuse."

Kamijou immediately refused Kanzaki's orders.

He sounded like he was standing in the middle of an icy cold rain.

"I want to do with this myself. I have to deal with this myself."

"But—"

Kanzaki sounded rather perplexed. Maybe it was her gentle side, as she didn't want Kamijou to take on his own relative.

But that angered Kamijou.

**"NO BUTS!! WHO THE HELL DO YOU THINK YOU ARE!? KAMIJOU TOUYA IS MY FATHER! MY DAD! THE ONLY DAD IN THE WORLD THAT CAN NEVER BE REPLACED!!!"**

Kamijou suddenly roared, which caused Mikoto to jerk her shoulders and stare

at Kamijou.

Kanzaki didn't say anything.

"Therefore..."

Kamijou muttered to himself.

Even if he didn't know what to do, even if he couldn't find an answer.

"That's why I want to deal with this personally. I won't let you interfere, I won't let you people hurt my dad. He's my dad—"

Kamijou Touma still made this declaration.

Even if his body was fatigued.

"—I must save Kamijou Touya."

## **Part 2**

Kamijou Touya was walking on the beach, dyed red by the sunset.

His face looked tired, and sweat flowed down his entire body. He had been running around, looking for the missing Kamijou, but even though he was extremely tired now, he wouldn't allow himself to rest. Dragging his tired legs, he continued to walk on the beach.

He didn't look like a magician at all.

He didn't look like a fighting expert at all.

"...Dad."

Kamijou called out to Touya.

That moment Touya's tired expression turned around, it became one of relief and delight.

A completely normal expression.

An expression of an ordinary father who had just found his lost son.

"Touma!"

After five seconds, Kamijou Touya barely managed to make an angry look.

"Where did you go!? If you wanted to go out, why didn't you tell us!? Your mother was worried about you! Didn't you say that you got summer heatstroke? Are you alright? Are you hurt? Do you feel like vomiting?"

Less than a second in, the angry lecture had become concern for Kamijou.

That was to be expected.

Touya wasn't angry at Kamijou because he hated him.

Fathers always get angry at their children because they were worried.

Kamijou gritted his teeth.

If possible, Kamijou really didn't want to force Touya to say it aloud. Kamijou didn't want to ask Touya whether he was the culprit behind Angel Fall. Kamijou just wanted to pretend that nothing had happened, follow Touya back to the resort and continue chatting away as per usual.

But he couldn't do it.

The Angel Fall incident had to be settled.

Even if he had to go up against Touya, even if he wanted to stop Touya's dream from happening, even if he would be hated by his own father, even if he couldn't talk to Touya like family members do, it was alright.

Kamijou had already decided.

He would definitely save Kamijou Touya.

Kamijou didn't know what Touya's aim was, but he didn't want his father to enter the bloody world of magic. Kamijou knew what a magician was, and he knew how terrifying those people were. Kamijou didn't want to imagine numerous magicians, including Misha, coming to hunt Touya down.

So, this had to be settled before Misha arrived.

Angel Fall must be removed.

"...Why?"

Thus, Kamijou spoke up.

Kamijou was extremely careful not to let his voice tremble, and not to let himself cry.

Seeing Kamijou like this, Touya frowned.

"Why must you step into the magic world? Aren't you a person from the normal world? Why must you touch that stupid magic? What were you doing, damned dad!"

Hearing Kamijou say that, Touya's smile froze.

"What are you saying, Touma, the important thing now is—"

"Stop acting dumb! I'm asking you why did you do those things that only magicians will do!"

Like a cut string, the expression disappeared from Touya's face.

It was not the expression of a magician sensing danger. It was the expression of a father when his son found out something he shouldn't have done.

"...Before I answer this, let me ask a question. Touma, you don't have to tell me where you went. Let me ask you, is your body alright? Are you hurting anywhere?"

Facing the dual-layered sunset on the sky and the sea, as if the world was

burning, Touya asked Kamijou that.

Kamijou was shocked that he still asked such an unimportant question at this critical moment.

Just like a father.

"Seeing you like this, you should be alright, right?"

Kamijou Touya heaved a sigh of relief.

"Alright, where should we begin?"

Kamijou remained silent.

He couldn't think of what to say. He couldn't possibly be expected to say something. However, Kamijou didn't look away from his father, not even once.

Like a toy without a battery, Touya's face lost all expression.

To Kamijou, the man in front of him seemed to have aged by ten years.

"I myself felt...that it was a stupid thing to use that method to achieve my wish."

Touya finally started to explain.

"Hey, Touma. You may not remember it because you were sent to Academy City right after you graduated from kindergarten," Touya seemed to recall something. "But do you still remember when we were together, what the people around us called you?"

"...?"

Kamijou frowned.

Having lost his memory, he couldn't even remember anything in July of this year.

Touya was about to say something before holding it back.

After pausing for a while, he said, "They called you a god of pestilence."

Touya said that with a devastated expression that looked as if he wanted to kill himself by biting his tongue.

As a father, he actually had to say that fact to his own son. Touya revealed a regretful expression.

“Do you understand, Touma? Ever since you were born, you held misfortune. That is why you were called that. But do you understand, Touma? That was not just teasing by children who had no real ill will.”

Touya gritted his teeth.

“Even most adults called you that. There was no real reason for it. Just because you held misfortune, they called you that.”

Kamijou couldn't help but hold his breath.

It was impossible to see the expression on Touya's face.

No delight, no happiness, nothing could be seen at all.

“The children believed that just by having you around, other's gained misfortune. Because they believed that, they would throw rocks at you just because they saw you. And the adults did not stop them. When they saw your injuries, it did not make them sad. It instead made them sneer at you. They would urge the kids to hurt you even worse.”

Touya continued on with the blank expression. Kamijou couldn't tell what he was feeling.

Maybe Touya was deliberately trying not to show any expression. Behind his mask was an insuppressible agitation that couldn't be held back. That emotion definitely couldn't be shown in front of his own son. Maybe one could tell his determination here.

“The children believed that when you left, their misfortune would also leave. Because they believed that, they would avoid you. Even the adults believed that. Do you remember, Touma? A man buried in debt once chased you around with a knife trying to stab you. When the TV stations heard about it, they used a paranormal show as an excuse to show your face on TV without permission and

treat you like a monster.”

The world, now dyed orange, looked like a blazing inferno of hell.

The man standing in the middle of the flames chose to keep this icy feeling that didn't have any emotions in it.

“That is why I sent you to Academy City. I was scared. I wasn't scared of the whole fortune and misfortune thing. I was scared of the reality that people would act violently towards you as if it was the natural thing to do just because they believed in that.”

Touya started to cry painfully without any expression.

“I was afraid that superstition would kill you one day, Touma. So I sent you to a world without superstition.”

Thus, Touya himself had cut the bond between family members.

As long as he could protect his own son, it was alright even if they couldn't live together.

“But even in that forefront of science, you were still treated as having misfortune. I could tell just from reading the letters you sent. It did seem the malicious violence was gone, but that was not enough for me.”

Touya smiled.

“I wanted to destroy your misfortune itself. However, that was clearly a wish that could not be granted with the methods of even the forefront of science.”

Even though he knew that it was a wish that couldn't be granted.

Kamijou Touya wouldn't give up.

“Only one path remained to me. I reached out to the occult.”

Then, Kamijou Touya stopped talking and remained silent.



Kamijou started to think. Touya said that he had activated Angel Fall to remove the misfortune from Kamijou. But what did he intend to summon an angel for? Did he simply wish to talk directly to God and hope that God would hear his prayer? Why did he get so many people involved, switching all the inside and outside of all the people in the world for...?

Upon thinking about it, Kamijou understood.

The switch of the inside. In other words, Kamijou Touma's title of an unfortunate man would end up with somebody else.

It was not important whether the angel would descend.

Kamijou Touya only wished to switch the inside and outside.

"...You bastard."

But that method had its pros and cons.

As the identity of Kamijou Touma would be switched with others, Kamijou Touma wouldn't think that Touya was his father. Not only that, a stranger would become Kamijou Touma, and walk around in his own family as the son.

Even so, Kamijou Touya was willing to make that sacrifice for his own son.

Even if he had to get the entire world involved.

Even if his own son would never ever call him dad again.

Even if the entire family wouldn't be able to gather happily again.

Kamijou Touya had chosen to protect his own son.

Even if he became a sinner, he would protect his son from the pain of that invisible misfortune.

"YOU BASTARD!!!"

Kamijou couldn't help but roar.

Touya revealed a surprised look, but that made it even more unbearable for Kamijou.

"That's right, I'm unlucky!"

Kamijou said with disdain.

"Just this summer vacation alone, I almost died a few times, and I even just had my entire right arm sliced off! If I have to compare it to everyone in class, I suppose only my summer was this unfortunate!"

Kamijou paused, and then continued.

"But have I said that I regretted this!? Did I say that I didn't want this unfortunate summer vacation!? Stop joking around!! My summer vacation is unfortunate, but so what!? Is that little thing enough to make me regret!?"

That's right.

The one who had saved Himegami Aisa from Misawa Cram School was Kamijou Touma.

That's right.

The one who had saved Misaka Imouto from the experiment was Kamijou Touma.

Also...

The one who had protected that radiant smile of that white nun should also be...

Even if he only got involved because of others, even though they were just cases of misfortune, Kamijou had the right to brag about it. On the other hand, if Kamijou was too lucky and hadn't gotten involved in all that, just thinking of the aftermath was enough to make his break out in cold sweat.

"If I hadn't been so unlucky it's true that I could live longer, and I wouldn't have to face the gates of death several times." Kamijou glared at Touya and said, "But can that be considered fortune? Living a normal everyday life so casually, and yet not finding out that others are suffering, drenched in blood as they cry for

help. Casually living, is this really fortune?"

"That's why, don't stop me!"

"I don't want to be that lucky guy. Instead of living a carefree life and not knowing about the pain of the people around me, I'd rather be unfortunate and get involved in the pain of those people."

Kamijou Touma said.

**"Don't think that I'm an unlucky person. I'm the luckiest person in the world!"**

Kamijou's face was showing a smile.

A ferocious, savage, rough and inelegant smile.

But it was the best and strongest smile.

With such a smile, Kamijou had made such a declaration.

"..."

Touya.

Kamijou Touya couldn't say anything.

In this orange world, the waves could be heard, and Touya laughed. He continued to laugh, laugh, laugh and laugh.

"Haha—"

Then, Kamijou Touya revealed a slight real smile

"What the heck."

Touya just said in a half-joking tone.

"So you were always that fortunate, Touma."

Kamijou nodded his head without hesitation.

Touya finally looked like he was free of his burden.

"I'm such an idiot, I only knew how to make things worse. I nearly took my son's happiness away."

After feeling relieved, Touya started to mock himself.

"But actually, I didn't do anything. I was an idiot. What can I do, going around collecting those memorabilia? I definitely understood that those strange cosmic forces are all superstitions."

"Eh?"

His father's words made him frown.

But Touya didn't notice his son's bewilderment.

"Those lucky charms that the gift shops sell were said to what, protect the family, excel in academics, these are all exotic crafts. If I could remove that misfortune of yours like that, your misfortune isn't worth bragging about. I won't go about buying that stuff, and instead just get some snacks. Your mom will be happy as well."

"Hold, hold on a minute."

Kamijou was stunned for a second, and then continued.

"Didn't you trigger Angel Fall? Where's the ritual site? Since your aim of removing my misfortune is gone, you should be able to remove Angel Fall right?"

However, Kamijou's words only puzzled Touya.

"Angel Fall? What's that? Some modern lingo? Or is that a singer's name?"

"...Hold, wait a minute!" Kamijou seriously stared at Touya's face and asked, "Do you know where mom is?"

"Why are you asking that all of a sudden, Touma? She may have went back to the resort, right?"

Kamijou was stunned.

His father's face didn't look like he was lying.

Touya really thought that Index was his wife. But that didn't make sense. If Kamijou Touya really triggered Angel Fall, he shouldn't be affected.

(Wait, think fast! What did I miss out? The situation now is too weird. Dad's explanation seems like he just bought a lot of charms for his son.)

But there was no time to think.

Kamijou's thoughts were interrupted by the sounds of footsteps on the beach.

Kamijou lifted his head up.

"...Misha Kreutzev!"

When did she appear? On that beach without any hiding spots, a girl wearing red clothes and a red cloak suddenly appeared. Seeing this blond girl that had black straps and even a ring around her.

Misha didn't respond to Kamijou's shout.

The girl just faced Touya silently.

They were about a hundred meters away from each. Kamijou recalled the attack last night, and his spine started to freeze in fear. The terrifying Hino Jinsaku had been sent packing like a stray cat by the overwhelming power of Misha. One hundred meters wasn't a distance to Misha.

But Kamijou still believed that everyone could talk it out. He still believed so.

He casually walked forward, stood in front of Touya, and then said, "Hold on, Misha. Something's not right. My dad wasn't switched by anyone, but he didn't notice that the people around him got switched. This means that he got affected by Angel Fall, but I don't know why--!?"

Before he could finish, Kamijou's throat dried up.

His body was trembling.

From the petite body of Misha Kreutzev, there seemed to be something spraying out. Kamijou's feet were just nailed to the floor. His stomach could feel a tremendous pressure, his breathing was erratic, and his heartbeat was getting faster. There was a sense of pain deep within his brain that was like fireworks, and he stopped thinking.

Did Misha's pores let out poisonous gas? Of course not. Misha didn't do anything, but that was enough to force Kamijou to be unable to move.

Killing intent.

The killing intent alone was enough to turn Kamijou to stone.

The tremendous pressure that was released made him feel like the surrounding gravity was increased by ten times.

Slowly, Misha raised her slender hand and reached for the belt strap on her waist. She drew out the L-shaped crowbar. Seeing that blunt tip, Kamijou could feel that Touya was so fearful he forgot how to breathe. The blunt and heavy tip looked even scarier than a sharp blade.

"Hold it—Misha...listen to me!"

Kamijou still tried to talk to Misha, but Misha didn't respond.

A gust of wind blew by, and Misha's bangs started to wave.

Behind the bangs, the eyes that looked like lightning were completely emotionless.

If Hino Jinsaku's eyes could be said to be wild and agitated, Misha's eyes were the complete opposite. They were no longer a human's eyes. A human couldn't possibly have those eyes that covered all emotional sense. It seemed like those eyeballs were two glass balls or crystals.

Misha Kreutzev didn't say anything.

She just stretched the L-shaped crowbar aside, glancing at Kamijou as if she were watching him.

He was numb.

Kamijou didn't say anything now.

The petite girl in red clothes in front of him didn't look like a human anymore. It was as though she was something with human skin over it. Slowly, Misha raised the L-shaped crowbar as if she was holding an axe.

The interrogation tool had fractured Hino Jinsaku's wrist in one hit. Could Kamijou dodge and protect Touya at the same time? Kamijou's body started to tremble, and his palms started to give off disgusting sweat.

But he wouldn't back away.

Kamijou clenched his trembling right hand tight.

Suddenly, Kanzaki's growl came from somewhere.

"Move aside! Kamijou Touma!"

The sound of wind being cut could be heard.

An invisible slash passed between Kamijou and Misha, forming a wall of sand. Misha, who had been holding the crowbar and intending to launch the attack, was instantly distracted. At that moment, Kanzaki appeared between the two of them.

Standing beside Kanzaki, who was giving off killing intent, was Tsuchimikado, who came back.

"It's been tough on you, Kami-yan. Good work. Since you managed to talk it out, back down, it's our job next."

Though it was unknown what Kanzaki and Tsuchimikado did, they seemed to be remaining vigilant.

On seeing Tsuchimikado, Touya's jaw dropped. This was to be expected. Because of Angel Fall, to Touya, Tsuchimikado was an idol who had just made the headlines because of a scandal.

But there was no time to explain this misunderstanding to him.

Though Kamijou was shocked, he was still staring at Misha, who was acting strangely.

"Oi Tsuchimikado! What's with her?"

"Hei, thinking about it, it's really strange!" Tsuchimikado smirked and said, "We thought that people from other religious sects wouldn't tell us their real names, so we never asked. But thinking about it, she shouldn't be calling herself Misha. At that moment, we should have realized that something's up nya."

"?"

"This name: Misha."

Kanzaki carefully glared at Misha and said, "It's a male's name in Russia. It's illogical to use that name as an alias."

Misha herself didn't rebut this.

She just narrowed her eyes and pointed the tip of the crowbar from Touya to Kanzaki.

"What...?"

"We asked the Russian Orthodox, and they said that there's only a Sasha Kreutzev. It seems like she's Sasha before she got switched."

Kamijou stared at Misha.

That was right. Under Angel Fall's influence, she should have switched with someone. But the problem is, who was this girl in Kreutzev's body?

"There are beings that can exist as male and females, Kami-yan. They have no gender. In legend, they either remain neutral or have features of both genders. To them, the 'name' is the reason why God created them, so they can't exchange names with others."

Hearing Tsuchimikado's words, Kamijou frowned,

*"Have you forgotten, Kami-yan? What's the name of this grand spell?"*

At that moment, Misha widened her eyes.

BOOM! An earth-shattering boom could be heard.

The sunset sky that was dyed orange instantly became a starry night sky.

"Wha..."

Kamijou inadvertently looked up at the sky. Touya stopped breathing.

Night. It was as if something switched off the lights, and the evening sky suddenly became pitch black night. The unlucky symbol of the full moon hung over them. That was strange, no matter what, today should have been a crescent moon.

"W-what's going on?"

"Can't you tell? She turned the evening into night."

Kanzaki said it casually, but Kamijou was astounded.

It was easy to say that she changed the evening sky to night, but that meant that the person in front of them could control the relative positions of the earth to the sun. No, even the orbit of the moon was switched. That meant that the moon and other planets were under control.

Controlling celestial bodies.

Maybe that terrifying ability was so terrifying that people couldn't experience it personally, but this was a power that could destroy the world. For example, if the world's axis were tilted by ten degrees, a fourth of all life on earth would be destroyed. And if the world stopped spinning, the world would be instantly destroyed. The people standing on the world may not feel it, but actually, the world was spinning at a terrifying speed of 1666 kilometers an hour. If it suddenly stopped, it would be like making an emergency brake. The terrifying force could flip all the things on the surface of the Earth.

That meant...

That at anytime, at any place, once Misha decided it, the world would be at it's end.

"Hold, hold on a minute! Can magic do such scary things?"

"For a human, of course not."

With a sharp and icy look, Kanzaki's voice sounded like a blade.

"Summoning the night to strengthen its own element and putting the moon as the main part. Oh, I see. The element of water, the controller of blue, the guardian of the moon, the keeper of the back. The one who buried the fallen city of Gomorrah under a rain of fire in the Old Testament, the one who foretold the news of the birth of the Son of God to the virgin in the New Testament."

At that moment, Kamijou finally remembered.

Angel Fall.

Since it was named as such, it naturally meant that something descended into this world.

"—Your name is Power of God, the twin-winged archangel aligned to the left side of God, right?"

The breaker of God (Kanzaki) said that, but the servant of God didn't reply.

An invisible shell-like thing started to crack, and the invisible skin was molting.

'That thing' completely awakened.

## **Part 3**

The angel didn't do anything.

Kanzaki stood in front of Kamijou and Touya, and she reached for the nodachi at her waist.

"An angel's power is neither good or evil. Those who were directed by God to save mortals will be praised as angels. Once they fall onto the corrupted earth, they will become terrifying demons."

Kanzaki said in a curse-like voice.

"It's as according to what the Old Testament described. Do you really want to return to heaven? Power of God?"

Kamijou stared dumbstruck at Misha—no, the angel called Power of God. Maybe her reason of preventing Angel Fall was even simpler than anyone here.

Angel Fall was a spell that caused an angel to fall into the mortal world.

An angel that got pulled down would definitely want to go back.

Power of God didn't say anything.

There was no need to talk. She raised the L-shaped crowbar high as if it was a lit fuse.

Kamijou felt a chill, as if his heart was speared by an ice pillar.

The moon above him was even whiter, even brighter. The bright moon created a halo around it, as if a camera lens was forced near the sun. With the full moon at the center, the halo instantly expanded outwards. The interior of the halo formed all sorts of bright lines that looked like all sorts of complicated codes.

A magic array.

And that magic array wasn't just big. Looking closer, all the bright points that formed the lines were magic arrays themselves. It was like flocks of fish swimming together in the ocean, or ants crawling in single file on the land. Billions and billions of magic arrays were neatly arranged to form one huge array.

(How can, there be...such a terrifying scene.)

Looking up at the array of stars in the night, Kamijou was unable to say anything.

The stars in the night sky looked weak and fantastical, but it was just an illusion. Things that were further away seemed smaller—this was something that even an elementary school child could understand. Even one who stayed in Japan should have seen the fighter jets of the Self Defense Forces, or the ones stationed at the American bases, create contrails, but had anyone seen an engine spurt out fire?

That was the case right now.

The contrails released by a fighter jet would disappear after a certain distance. And as for the artificial lights visible in the stratosphere, most likely, only the lights from the rocket boosters of the satellites could be seen.

Even though Kamijou didn't understand anything about magic, he could understand this.

Those magic arrays weren't a trivial thing.

Kamijou could feel it, his body was trembling.

Looking up at the night sky, a drop of sweat appeared on Kanzaki's face.

"Are you serious? Power of God! You intend to use an Old Testament spell just to kill one person? Are you trying to destroy this world!?"

Kanzaki's tone and what she said were too shocking.

Kamijou inadvertently panicked and asked, "What? Oi, what does that angel intend to do...?"

"That's a torrent of fire arrows that once destroyed a civilisation. If that spell activates, humanity will cease to exist."

The seriousness of this situation far exceeded his understanding, and Kamijou was unable to comprehend what was going on.

But the words 'fire' and 'torrent' remained etched in him.

(Rain of fire arrows? Fall down? Don't tell me, those lights in the sky, these billions of bright spots that aren't any different from rocket fuel will land onto the surface!?)

Kamijou remained rigid as he looked at the night sky. The simplest thing he could think of was that the billions of bright spots were missiles aimed at the world. If all those missiles landed on the earth, it would far surpass a carpet bombing. Even if one missile was assigned to every person, there would still be many remaining.

Kamijou wasn't clear how large the attack range was. Maybe it was a city, or maybe a country. If any place that could see the night sky was part of the range, half the world would be reduced to ash.

Kanzaki looked like her heart could stop at any time.

"Without God's orders, angels shouldn't be able to kill. Have you forgotten about that, Power of God? According to the New Testament, the Final Judgment of judging the souls has been decided. Killing people randomly will cause it to be affected, you should be clear about this! This is what you told humanity!"

Kamijou had heard those words from Tsuchimikado before.

At the end of the world, God would descend down to the mortal world and decide everyone's fate, whether they were going to heaven or to hell. If a person who shouldn't be killed was dead, his children wouldn't be born. If that happened, his grandchildren and great-grandchildren wouldn't be born. That was why those who could control time and space were those supremacists who could control history. The angels who escaped from the history of humanity also had the power to change humanity's future.

The supremacists.

The angel didn't respond to Kanzaki's earnest plea to not kill humans.

No anger, no frenzy, no mockery, no sneering, nor any guilt.

It wasn't moving at all.

Seeing that, goosebumps appeared on Kamijou. They couldn't talk to that angel

called Power of God. Ever since Angel Fall occurred, perhaps she was like a train that had gone off track.

The angel had only one command to itself, and that was to return to heaven.

It was already unable to think of what would happen to the world.

It just wanted to return to its correct position.

It was like an organ transplant. If an organ that was not suitable was transplanted, the body would reject it, even though it knew that it would die.

It had been willing to work together with Kamijou and company just to find out who the person was.

After an all-out bombardment, it would be unable to tell whether its target was dead from the pile of corpses and rubble. Thus, it had to remember the target's face.

Kamijou gritted his teeth and looked up.

Kamijou's right hand could neutralize any supernatural power, even if it was God's miracle. However, the magic array was located too far away. Even a fighter jet couldn't reach that altitude.

Thus, Kamijou turned to glare at the Power of God.

If he wanted to destroy those magic arrays, the only way was to beat the caster down. Like Angel Fall, the spell was still incomplete.

"Damn it..."

But faced with that simple answer, Kamijou couldn't help but grit his teeth.

If he did that, how would it be different from what that angel did?

"DAMN IT!!"

Power of God was just staring at Kamijou expressionlessly.

Its eyes were like someone standing high above, looking down at insects rolling

around in the dirt.

The archangel that could destroy the world without raising a finger didn't say anything.

Its eyes didn't have any look of danger, not even a look a pity.

Because there was no need to pity a bug that was going to be crushed to death.

"WHAT KIND OF SICK JOKE IS THIS! AT LEAST SAY SOMETHING! LISTEN UP, I'M ANGRY, I'M REALLY ANGRY!! THERE'S NO ROOM FOR NEGOTIATION, REMOVE THIS SPELL RIGHT NOW!!!"

Kamijou roared at the girl who was shorter than him, but his voice was trembling.

At that moment, Touya was shocked that his own son was still scolding.

Kamijou recalled the speed, the power, the distance control and the battle skills that Misha had used to send Hino retreating in front of his eyes. Even if it was pretending, it still had that power, a godlike power. If they fought, Kamijou would only be played with in its hands.

Besides, right now, its victory was just right in front.

Because it didn't need to disguise itself anymore.

"..."

A lot of sweat flowed down Kamijou's body. In order to protect Touya, Kamijou took a step forward. This may have looked courageous, but it was merely suicidal. The difference in power between a human and the Power of God couldn't be closed down. It was like using martial arts to take on a nuclear missile.

"Kamijou Touma."

At that moment, Kanzaki Kaori silently turned her head back and looked at Kamijou Touma.

"I'll take care of the Power of God, hurry up and take Touya-shi away from here."

For a moment, Kamijou was unable to understand what Kanzaki meant.

Because she had said it so casually.

In this situation where it was not much different from using martial arts to take on a nuclear missile.

Kanzaki wasn't hesitating, bothered, tolerant, fearful, anxious,

She stood before Kamijou, facing the angel that was like a death god.

"W-why...?"

Thus, Kamijou could only choose to ask that.

Facing this question Kamijou barely managed to make out, Kanzaki said without turning her head back, "No reason. There's something I should do here, which is why I'm standing here. It's just that simple."

Kanzaki then said in an uninterested tone, "The Sweep? How meaningless, really meaningless. If you do that, I won't be able to achieve my aim."

Kanzaki stepped forward.

Kamijou was unable to stop her, nor was he able to catch up to her. Though they were less than a meter away from each other, it made Kamijou feel like he wouldn't be able to catch up with her for all of humanity. It wasn't because the enemy was strong, not because of the fear within him, not because of the sharpness, weight, speed, cold or heat.

But because of the nature.

With her back facing Kamijou as she faced the Power of God, Kanzaki gave off a presence of nature that indicated that she had the right to do this.

The Breaker of God said, "The following battle will far exceed a human's limits. When escaping, be careful not to get caught in the shockwave."

Facing the word 'escaping', Kamijou was unable to understand.

At this point, where could they run off to? Could they actually run off to Mars?

Kanzaki didn't turn back as she continued to say to the puzzled Kamijou, "Think about it, the Power of God just needs to cast the Sweep to easily end everything here. Why is it silently waiting there for us to take action?"

Now that Kanzaki said it, Kamijou finally realized it.

Since it had the power of the Sweep, why didn't it take action quickly? To the Power of God, there should be no reason to hesitate, as she had only one goal.

Why didn't it quickly summon the Sweep?

"It's not that it's not activating it, but that it can't. Even if it's the Power of God, it will take quite some time to activate such a large spell. This isn't weird. When it activated the God's Purge that destroyed an entire civilisation, it took quite some preparation time."

Kanzaki said.

"...About thirty minutes. Fufu, wouldn't that be too short to send all the animals up the Ark?"

Kamijou was speechless.

Only thirty minutes left. Thirty minutes later, the Sweep spell would send billions of burning fire arrows down on half the world like billions of missiles. Of course, Kamijou's Imagine Breaker wasn't going to save the entire world.

But on the other hand...

If they could beat the Power of God within those thirty minutes.

"If that's the case, that's even more reason for me not to run away! I want to fight! Against this enemy from the magic world, my right hand should more or less be of some help!"

"Don't be stupid, if we professionals let amateurs get hurt protecting us, we don't

even have the right to commit seppuku."

Kanzaki sounded rather casual.

"WHY ARE YOU STILL SO CONFIDENT IN YOURSELF!? THAT THING WON'T SHOW ANY MERCY! THAT NONSENSE YOU GUYS SPOUTED ABOUT ANGELS UNABLE TO KILL HUMANS ISN'T RELIABLE AT ALL!!"

Kamijou sounded like someone who was trying to prevent a lunatic from jumping off a building.

"HOW CAN I LEAVE SUCH AN OPPONENT TO YOU! I WANT TO FIGHT! HOW CAN I RUN AWAY EVEN AT THIS POINT!!"

"Listen to me."

But Kanzaki seemed abnormally calm,

"This thing in front of us is already past an ordinary person's realm. It's stupid to fight against it, let alone beat it."

Kamijou held his breath as he stared at Kanzaki.

"But don't be mistaken. I don't want to lose my life like that. I may not be able to beat it, but I don't think that I'll lose. Maybe I can divert it away and hold it off."

Kanzaki said silently.

"Kamijou Tuma, while I hold her off, please take Touya-shi away to remove Angel Fall."

"Wait, what did you say?"

"Have you forgotten what's the goal of the Power of God? The reason why it activated the Sweep was just to remove Angel Fall. In other words, if we remove Angel Fall before it activates the Sweep, there's no need for it to cast the spell, right?"

The last sentence didn't seem to be directed at Kamijou, but at the archangel.

The unmoving angel didn't respond to her.

It was because to the Power of God, all that wasn't important. Thirty minutes later, the Sweep would kill the caster of Angel Fall, Touya, and end everything. Even if Kamijou and the rest used another way to remove Angel Fall, it wouldn't be of any disadvantage to the angel.

Thus, Power of God just silently let Touya escape from its eyes.

Its attitude was like saying, no point arguing with you since the outcome will be the same.

It had an Astro in Hand spell that was even scarier than the Sweep, it was just wondering which method was more suitable to settle the problem right now.

Kamijou glanced at Touya. It was true that leaving him with the Power of God here was too dangerous.

"But what about yourself? Is it really alright to go against that Power of God..."

"Who knows, but this is the best choice. With your ability, you can't contain it. You have to seriously do your job well and try to destroy Angel Fall. Your hard work will increase my chances of survival."

Kanzaki stared at the Power of God and stepped forward.

"And I don't wish to cause ordinary civilians to die because of battle between magicians. I definitely can't allow Kamijou Touya to die, even if I have to sacrifice my life."

"...Can you really do that?"

"Yeah. Though it's a little disrespectful for me to say this, I decide to trust you for now. Just like the time when you saved that child in front of me, this time, please save me."

Kanzaki didn't say any more.

Kamijou wanted to say something, but he didn't know what to say.

It would be a waste of time to stop Kanzaki. Every meaningless action would decrease Kanzaki's survival rate.

Kamijou gritted his teeth.

"THEN I'LL LEAVE IT TO YOU, KANZAKI! I'LL TRUST YOU THIS TIME!"

Kamijou shouted as he grabbed Touya's wrist, who still didn't understand what was going on, and pulled him to the resort.

"Oi! Hold up a minute! What's going on!?" Touya shouted, but Kamijou ignored him.

Power of God turned away from Kanzaki and stared at Kamijou and Touya.

Kanzaki moved her body and again blocked the Power of God's line of sight.

"Your opponent is me. One of an angel's responsibilities is to act as a messenger between God and humanity, so you have to listen to me, right?"

At this moment, Kanzaki actually smiled.

"Speaking of which, did he really just say that he decided to trust me? Stiyl said that he nearly went crazy during the Misawa Cram School' battle so this feeling isn't exaggerated. But this is the best way to say it. Because of that, my chances of survival have really increased."

After saying that, Kanzaki grabbed onto the hilt of the Shichiten Shichitou.

The Power of God that was staring at Kanzaki silently suddenly muttered in an alien language.

"—qSTUPIDrw"

With a loud boom, a huge explosion occurred behind the angel.

Her back let out something that looked like wings.

They weren't wings that were as elegant as a swan's, but the screen of ice wings like a peacock.

Numerous sharp wings that looked that they were carved out from ice extended outwards like a hill of swords. At the same time, the sea behind Power of God let out an irregular tide, and numerous huge sea serpents or sea dragons formed from several tons of seawater rush out and gathered behind the angel.

The back fused with the seawater, forming a huge wing of water.

The huge water wing of blades opened up behind the Power of God, and each of them were about fifty to seventy meters in length. They looked like walls that nobody could climb up, and like a wall of sharp crystals that could cut anyone's fingers on the slightest touch.

The numerous ice wings stabbed up at the sky.

Finally, a drop of water appeared above the Power of God. The drop of water drew a small circle, forming a halo in the air.

The color was like the surface of the sky at night, bringing the azure blue presence with black shadows and death.

Each wing was thoroughly infused with Telesma, and each attack could flatten mountains and carve valleys like Divine Judgment. Even if it was on the battlefield as per normal, Kanzaki, who often caused enemies to back away in fear, was now stiff with tension. If it were anyone else, the killing intent released would have caused the person to faint.

"I really got quite a bad job now."

Kanzaki said as she lowered herself.

—At that moment, Kanzaki realized something.

"Tsuchimikado? Where are you? Tsuchimikado?"

He was gone.

It was unknown when Tsuchimikado disappeared from the battlefield.

Even in that situation, Tsuchimikado still insisted on his philosophy of betrayal, causing Kanzaki to be dumbfounded.

"Oh well, he's like this anyway. Even if I ignore him, he'll find a way to survive through his own way. Right now, I need to make a path to survival through my own way. While using Yuisen, please allow me to declare my magic name."

Then, Kanzaki Kaori let it out from her mouth.

The other name that she had carved on her body, heart, and soul.

"Salvare000 — Be the salvation of those who cannot be saved."

## **Part 4**

At this moment, Tsuchimikado was running alone in the darkness.

(Damn it, things just got out of hand! I should have destroyed 'that' earlier if possible!)

It was like he was running away from the battlefield, from the war.

(But I should forget about my past mistakes! A human has to think positively! Alright, now that the bothersome Kanzaki's being held up, I can finally move out!)

As if he was running to a new battlefield, as if he was a fly flying to a fire.

(Fufufu! The time of betrayal I expect the most is finally here! Sorry Kami-yan! It seems like we need to sacrifice at least someone to settle this!)

Fallere825 — The Backstabbing Blade Tsuchimikado Motoharu continued to run in the darkness cackling happily.

## Part 5



Kanzaki Kaori and the Power of God were facing off ten meters away from each other.

But for a believer of Christianity, this could only be described as stupid. It was not that Kanzaki was too weak or the archangel was too strong; it was not that kind of simple dimensional question, but an even more basic and simpler paradox.

Basically, all the religions in human history had a rule.

It was the decree that they couldn't go against God.

It would be different if it were the pagans who believed in different gods, but the Christians believed that they couldn't go against the Christian angels. On

thinking about it, that was something obvious.

In other words. Since Kanzaki was affiliated to the church, she wouldn't be able to beat the Power of God.

In terms of rock-paper-scissors, the believers were scissors, and angels were rock. It was obvious to see who would win.

So Kanzaki's action was really comical.

But the angel girl didn't say anything, or even show a smile of pity.

Power of God raised one of its water wings. Though they were about ten meters away from each other, it didn't matter to the seventy-meter-long water wing; instead, it may have been too close.

The water wings that were infused with Telesma from tip to tip could each send out a Judgment that could wreck a city. Once it sent that, this beach would vanish completely, forming a crate like cover, like how in legend, God shaped the earth.

Power of God didn't hesitate.

Even though it knew the devastation this would cause on a human.

The archangel that controlled the color blue raised the seventy meter water wing in the air without hesitation.

Such a scene gave a look that a tower was collapsing. The air that was ripped became a fist of air as it scattered about, until the wind itself collapsed due to the water wing. The water wing came swinging down at Kanzaki Kaori with shocking speed.

It was all over.

Everything should have been over.

BAM! With a clear sound, the water wing was sliced in half by a horizontal flash.

Who could have predicted such a scene?

Power of God was stunned, and Kanzaki merely took a deep breath in response.

The over two-meter-long nodachi that was hanging from Kanzaki Kaori's waist.

The moment she drew the sword, the seventy-meter-long water wing was sliced easily like a bamboo tube. Also, the remains of the sliced water wing immediately scattered into powder like an explosion and vanished into the darkness of the night sky.

Kanzaki didn't say anything.

The long blade of the nodachi had already been sheathed silently into the black sheath.

The bangs of the Power of God trembled slightly. The glass-ball-like eyes behind the bangs rolled about, seemingly looking for Kanzaki's weakness. Power of God raised another water wing from its back, as if it were an experiment.

This time, the water wing swung over, and the storm it whipped up seemed like it would flatten everything.

But the same thing happened again.

ZZSSTT!! Kanzaki Kaori's slash easily sliced that fifty-meter-long water wing in half.

And Kanzaki's body hadn't wavered from the speed of the unsheathing nodachi or the weight. The moment the blade was drawn, it was sheathed back silently.

Ten meters away, Kanzaki Kaori calmly stroked her hilt.

The angel stopped.

It seemed to be thinking of a new tactic to deal with this prey.

"I think that" Kanzaki taunted, "you don't have to be shocked about this level of counterattack. Seems like you underestimated this being called Kanzaki Kaori."

Power of God didn't respond. What replaced it were two water wings that

crossed each other like pliers.

BOOM! The two water wings struck at Kanzaki with a boom.

But Kanzaki flipped her body like a tornado, slashing the two water wings in half at the same time with one strike.

"..."

The bangs swayed about in the air, the eyes behind them rolled about, seemingly confirming something.

It wasn't just one or two, four water wings had been sliced. It was obvious that this wasn't a random coincidence. But if so, this formed a paradox, Christians couldn't possibly oppose Christian angels.

On the other hand, Kanzaki looked rather casual.

"You believe that I'm just a simple Christian, and that's the beginning of your mistakes."

Kanzaki confidently explained.

"My spells belong to the Amakusa Church. That's a Japanese Christianity sect that got persecuted during the Edo period and created out of the necessity to maintain our belief."

In that cruel era, when merely holding a cross or a statue of the Virgin Mary resulted in painful executions, the believers could only use the wooden plates Shintoism and Buddhism to use as cover, and ended up mixing with other religions until they couldn't even tell which parts were Shintoism's, which parts were Buddhism's, and which parts were Christianity's. Thus, they ended up creating a new religion.

The multi-religious aspects Christian system, the Amakusa.

In other words, since Christian spells couldn't beat an angel, instead of using Christian spells, she should use Buddhism or Shintoism spells or any spells from religions that didn't have any angels to attack the angel.

If Christian spells wouldn't work, she'd use Buddhist spells.

If Buddhist spells wouldn't work, she'd use Shinto spells.

If Shinto spells wouldn't work, she'd use Christian spells.

The Amakusa could use other sorts of spells to make up for the religions' weaknesses. So the fact that the Christians couldn't beat angels didn't exist for Kanzaki.

Power of God looked frozen. Three water wings came swinging over the left and right.

But the water wings were still easily sliced by Kanzaki's nodachi flash.

"And Japan's Shintoism is one that has many gods. It has the belief that all things on earth have a divine attachment of many gods to it; any tool that doesn't have any value will become a part of God's will after a long time. There are many gods that are created by human means, like the dog gods, monkey gods and serpent gods that protect the house. Perhaps among all the religions, Shintoism has the most gods."

Kanzaki deliberately stroked the Shichiten Shichitou.

"Thus, it may be hard for an angel with only one god to imagine. Shintoism has many gods, and there are even interaction spells between humans and gods, human spells that are meant to take on Christian spells. In many Japanese folklore, there's a lot of stories about using an ordinary nodachi to kill an evil god who lost its mind or request for a girl as a sacrifice. Shintoism has a taboo—one mustn't harm gods. Think about it, why is there such a rule?"

Kanzaki Kaori said that casually.

She was declaring to the angel that this wouldn't be a one-sided battle.

"..."

Power of God stared at the enemy silently. Absorbing new seawater, the sliced water wings were restored to their old shape and size.

But for Kanzaki, she didn't need any preparations. She just needed to use her fingers to lightly stroke the hilt of the nodachi at her waist. Using the unique breathing to refine the magic energy within her, she could turn herself into the Breaker of God.

Silence.

After a tenth of a second of silence that an ordinary human couldn't feel.

The Power of God and the Breaker of God started their duel with their lives on their line.

BOOM! A roar could be heard.

The archangel sent a fifty-meter-long water wing sliding down from above, and it was sliced in half by Kanzaki, who was 10m in front of it.

But the Power of God didn't mind. No matter how many water wings were cut, it could repair them. This time, the water wing swung over from the left, trying to use the time Kanzaki was undefended while she was sheathing her nodachi.

After Kanzaki sliced this attack, the next attack from the right was aimed at Kanzaki's back.

The Power of God and Kanzaki were about ten meters away from each other. The angel seemed like it wanted to maintain that distance and continued to attack Kanzaki with the water wings to prevent Kanzaki from getting close.

Kanzaki spun her body and turned her head around, slicing the water wing behind her with one slash. Seeing this, three water wings of the messenger of God attacked from the air, each with a slight time interval between them.

Even though there was a time interval, the difference was measured by a hundredth of a second. An ordinary person couldn't really sense that somewhat godlike speed. A human needed 0.18 seconds to process the command from the brain to the fingers, but Kanzaki in the Breaker of God mode could enter superhuman territory for a fixed duration, thus such logic didn't apply to her. Her blood vessels, muscles, nerves, organs and bones had obtained the God Breaker ability under the spell.

ZAN! The first water wing of the trio was slashed by Kanzaki's Battojutsu technique.

Before the next hundredth of a second arrived, Kanzaki had already sheathed the Shichiten Shichitou and prepared for the next attack.

Too easy, Kanzaki smiled in that time, but at that moment...

The second water wing actually exploded by itself.

Numerous blades that looked small broken pieces of glass were fired at Kanzaki.

"What...?"

Just as Kanzaki was trying to deal with the torrent of blades, the third water wing rushed over at a speed faster than the torrent of blades.

"...Ugh!"

Kanzaki was barely able to slash that unexpected third wing, but Kanzaki didn't have enough time to sheath the nodachi. If she sheathed it, she wouldn't be able to deal with the torrent of blades that were coming at her. Kanzaki gave up on the iaido and used the drawn nodachi to deal with the torrent of blades.

But it was impossible to block all the thousands of the blades with a nodachi.

Seventeen of the blades landed around Kanzaki (Though being able to knock them all away was already an unbelievable skill on its own). The boom caused a shockwave like explosion, and the sand surrounding her to whipped up.

Her vision was completely taken away by the wall of sand, like a storm in a desert.

At that moment, the water wings attacked from the left, right, and front right direction, ripping through the sand wall like paper doors.

At that moment, the trend for the battle was set.

Kanzaki and the Power of God were ten meters away from each other. In other words, Kanzaki couldn't attack the Power of God, but the Power of God could

attack Kanzaki.

And under the quick attacks of the angel, Kanzaki didn't even have time to put her drawn nodachi back into the sheath. She couldn't use her Battojutsu, so Kanzaki could only swing her nodachi desperately. Anyone could tell that Kanzaki was at the disadvantage there.

Kanzaki gritted her teeth.

She was one of the ten strongest magicians in London.

In Kanzaki's lifetime, the number of times she had lost in a one on one matchup could be counted with less than the number of fingers on both hands. And also, the 'one on one' didn't just mean human vs. human. Sometimes, it had been human vs. beast kings or even human vs. weapons.

But such a record seemed like it was going to be tested heavily today.

The record that could be counted with only the fingers on both hands seemed like it was not going to be enough.

However...

There was a huge question mark over whether the battle against that angel, who surpassed all logic, should count.

DOGAGAGAGAZAZAZA! Every second, there would be four or five water wings sliced apart in sparks.

The just-hardened nodachi seemed to lose its sharpness as they continued to be sliced.

The angel didn't want to give Kanzaki any time to rest. It continued to swing the water wings at a terrifying speed, intending to let the battle become a battle of attrition and wear Kanzaki down. Kanzaki didn't even have a hundredth of a second to rest. The numerous water wings seemed like creatures with a life of their own as they attacked Kanzaki with all sorts of angles, directions, speed and time intervals.

At that moment, there seemed to be something shining in Kanzaki's hand under

the moonlight.

Hiiun! With the sound of the air being ripped, seven steel wires shot out.

Nanasen.

Of course, facing the water wings that were thoroughly infused with Telesma, mere steel wires wouldn't work. Even though they were steel wires of global historical value, made from a swordsmith named Hidarimoji, they would be easily cut like a spiderweb.

But the moment the steel wires were cut, the speed of the water wings would decrease.

Even though the feeble resistance would only cause the water wings to slow down by a tenth of a second.

However...

In this battle, that instant was enough to give another four or five blows.

"—IkCHE!"

Power of God rolled its eyeballs. It got careless and cut the steel wires, causing the water wings to slow down. Of course, Kanzaki Kaori wouldn't let that tenth of a second gap off. She raised her nodachi horizontally and quickly dashed forward—

—But at that moment, Kanzaki's legs lost their balance.

(...?)

The angel used that time to readjust its attacks and swung out three consecutive water wings attacks, but Kanzaki still managed to slice them with terrifying speed and accuracy. But at that moment, Power of God realized something.

Kanzaki Kaori was sweating as if she had a fever.

Even though the God Breaker ability existed, it didn't mean that anyone could use it. Besides the issue of talent, the more important point was the huge burden

this spell exerted on the human body.

Actually, Kanzaki didn't really have a soft spot for Battojutsu.

It was just that if the spells she used couldn't decide the victor immediately, the huge burden would wreck her body.

The angel continued to attack mercilessly with the water wings as it stared at Kanzaki's face. Kanzaki was definitely moving far more than a normal human could, but not only was her face not turning red, it looked extremely pale as if it had been soaked in ice water. The hand that was holding onto the hilt of the nodachi was trembling.

The price of overworking had already started to wear Kanzaki's body down.

Power of God continued to swing the water wings as the effects of this battle of attrition were finally showing. If it kept the battle going, Kanzaki would wear herself out. Under the fast and slow attacks of the Power of God, Kanzaki's body finally started to waver.

The blue angel ordered the water wings behind it, intending to deal Kanzaki the final blow.

But Kanzaki stared at the Power of God with such sharpness in her eyes.

"...TOO SLOW!"

What was supposed to be the last water wing released by the angel was hacked in half by Kanzaki.

The continuous movements that were beyond an ordinary human body's capabilities caused Kanzaki's body temperature to rise abnormally, her blood flow was pulsating crazily, she was severely lacking oxygen, and her muscles and bones were creaking. That pain went beyond the fever; it could be said to be worse than taking poison.

But Kanzaki didn't stop.

With such savage and suicidal intent, she continued to hack at the water wings one by one, not letting up.

Kanzaki Kaori was holding off the angel's attacks, getting closer to death.

Every move she took, she could clearly feel her body being eroded. Every time she swung the Shichiten Shichitou, the overwork would rip her joints and twitch her blood vessels. The organs that were unable to get enough oxygen were prompting Kanzaki's brain in pain.

There was no way to know how long Kanzaki could last. If an artery burst because of overwork, Kanzaki would die.

"But—"

Kanzaki gritted her teeth, ripping the two water wings that attacked in a tornado like manner.

She said with a bloody mouth, "—So what?"

Kanzaki continued to swing the nodachi like a storm, slashing numerous water wings.

She definitely couldn't let the Power of God get through.

The Kamijou father and son were trying to prevent the Sweep from activating. If Kanzaki fell, they would be attacked by the Power of God.

She definitely couldn't let the Power of God get through!

She slashed the water wings from outside and endured the corroding of her body. Even if she was scarred thoroughly, Kanzaki still gritted her teeth and held onto the nodachi, making numerous slashes every second when it was supposed to be impossible; she was slashing the water wings multiple times within a single second and preparing for the next attack.

The smell of blood and her gradually hazing consciousness caused Kanzaki to remember a distant memory.

At the time, Kanzaki had still been the Priestess of the Amakusa. For a twelve-year-old, such a position and respect had been too much for her. But Kanzaki had always wondered. One of the priests would always read a scripture of the Bible. But there was one chapter that Kanzaki never understood.

Heaven and Hell.

It was said that when humans die, God would decide whether a person should be sentenced to Heaven or Hell. So humans had to do a lot of good things in order to prepare for Heaven.

However...

If God had the power to save everyone, why did he need a Hell?

If God could save everyone without exception, why didn't he do so? Couldn't he just guide those who went down the wrong path? If he really had a pair of divine hands, why couldn't he just let everyone have happiness and let everyone smile happily?

Why was it that only a few people could earn that happiness?

Why must the people who weren't chosen be sent to Hell?

Kanzaki had always been one of the chosen ones. However, that ended up causing the people around her miss out on getting chosen. When a plane Kanzaki had taken crashed, Kanzaki was the only survivor. When Kanzaki was hunted by an assassin, the bullet missed, but hit someone else beside her. When Kanzaki's room was blown up, many people had covered Kanzaki to block the impact, one of them a child less than ten years old.

The people who never got chosen until the end still smiled when they saw Kanzaki.

"Ahh, that's great."

"It's okay if you're alright."

They said that as they squeezed out their last ounces of breath, reaching out their hands to pat the young crying Kanzaki on the head to comfort her.

And then closed their eyes with that peaceful expression, and the comforting hands gradually lost their strength.

All that was Kanzaki's fault.

When God assigned happiness, he would mess up. So people like Kanzaki who weren't strong would be cared for, and numerous people would suffer for her. Thus Kanzaki didn't want to use her power for people who were chosen like her. That was because those who were chosen could live on with their own power, and that power shouldn't be hoarded among those chosen.

If Kanzaki's power was taken from those who weren't chosen, she should return it to them.

Because those who helped others, would always be the people who weren't chosen and were mercilessly abandoned.

So Kanzaki couldn't kill. Even if she had such tremendous power, she couldn't kill. There was once a time when Kanzaki had fought against a boy because of a certain situation. Anyone could have predicted the outcome of a fight between an expert and an amateur. It had been decided in mere seconds. However, the battered boy asked Kanzaki why she didn't kill him. The answer was simple, it was not that she hadn't wanted to, but that she couldn't. It was because those that Kanzaki wanted to protect were people who provided help to others like how the boy was beaten up.

So Kanzaki had made up her mind.

She would focus her only belief into her blade and use it to force open her own path.

God, if you're only willing to save the people you chose...

Then I'll save the people who weren't.

"—Ha, AAAHHH!!"

Kanzaki exhaled, and the Shichiten Shichitou swung out, slicing two water wings. The retracted blade lashed out again and attacked a third water wing. After defending against numerous attacks, Kanzaki was gradually beginning to feel that this battle would not last for long.

Kanzaki would most likely lose. Even though she had managed to obtain the God Breaker body through the Amakusa spell, she couldn't possibly remain unharmed through the vicious attacks of the water wings.

But Kanzaki wouldn't give up her life for naught. The moment her body got worn down, the water wings of the Power of God would slow down. If she used that chance and her remaining strength to infuse the God Breaker power into the Shichiten Shichitou and threw it at Sasha Kreutzev, maybe she could kill the archangel inside Sasha Kreutzev.

Kanzaki's face ached in pain.

But that wasn't because her defeat could be easily predicted.

But because Kanzaki didn't want to kill the Power of God as well. She just wanted to hold off the archangel. The Shichiten Shichitou Battojutsu Yuisen was different from the wire spell Nanasen, which was used to trick the enemy; she couldn't hold back. Thinking that her nodachi may accidentally hurt the Power of God, Kanzaki felt the strength gradually seep away from her fingertips.

But Kanzaki knew that she couldn't stop her blade. If she didn't go all out, Kanzaki would be ripped apart by the Power of God in an instant. Once Kanzaki lost, the Kamijou father and son would die.

If she wanted to save their lives, she couldn't relent in her attacks.

But if this kept up, Kanzaki would still have to choose to kill the Power of God.

And that was one of the reasons why Kanzaki had wanted Kamijou to get away from the battlefield as much as possible. If the amateur Kamijou went up against the Power of God, the chances of him dying immediately would be more than 99%. However, Kamijou's right hand had the Imagine Breaker that could erase any supernatural power. If he actually managed to touch the Power of God that was formed entirely by supernatural power, it was likely that the Power of God would be erased.

All those who weren't chosen were among those Kanzaki wanted to save.

Viewing it from another perspective, the archangel in front of her didn't want to be put in that situation.

When Angel Fall had been activated, among all the angels, only it had been affected, which was obviously another misfortune.

So...

(...If I want to settle this and prevent anyone from getting hurt or dying, I can only hope that Kamijou Touma can remove Angel Fall. I beg of you, Kamijou Touma, before this stupid battle lasts any longer—)

Kanzaki gave a painful expression as she continued to swing the Shichiten Shichitou.

Even when she was about to die, Kanzaki still prayed for the Power of God who was forcing her to her death. Kanzaki was praying deep inside like a terrified child.

(—I beg of you, please save this angel, Kamijou Touma!)

## Chapter 4: The Last Magician of This One World

While Kanzaki and Power of God were having their one hundredth out of this world fight, Kamijou and Touya finally dashed into the seaside resort.

But that didn't mean they were safe.

No matter where they ran to in the world, that Sweep spell the Power of God could use would instantly kill them. The Power of God was an enemy that surpassed all understanding.

Unable to understand anything, Touya waved his arms and breathed heavily as he asked, "T-Touma! Wait up, let me rest! What was that? What just happened? I seemed to have seen that guy on TV before. Are we filming now?"

It was obvious that Touya would feel weird about this without an explanation. But at this critical moment, the culprit behind this still looked like he didn't understand, angering Kamijou.

Just as Kamijou was about to start scolding, he noticed something weird. There seemed to be someone in the shadows behind the round table.

It was Misaka Mikoto.

"Wha...? Oi, are you all right? What happened?"

Kamijou rushed up to Mikoto and asked her, but Mikoto didn't respond. The final countdown needed about thirty minutes before activating. Had the Sweep started to activate?

At that moment, Kamijou noticed that something was amiss.

Kamijou's nose seemed to detect some light mysterious smell. Understanding what it was, he immediately held his breath.

CHCl<sub>3</sub>. Chloroform.

"Ku...ah..."

The chemical he had inhaled entered his brain, causing Kamijou's consciousness to become blurry. But as it wasn't much, he barely managed to stay conscious.

"Oi! Touma, what's with you? Oi!"

Touya asked worriedly. Kamijou raised a hand and waved it, indicating that he was alright. Who would do such a thing? Chloroform was the most toxic among Trihalomethanes, and may even cause cancer. Mikoto couldn't possibly inhale this thing.

(Who is it...?)

Kamijou suddenly started to worry about Index, who wasn't there. Even though he knew that time was short, Kamijou still couldn't help but run up to the second level.

Up the stairs, through the corridor, he slammed Touya's bedroom door open.

Kamijou saw Index collapsed on the floor as well. But this time, Kamijou didn't try to get down and detect CHCl<sub>3</sub>. The moment he saw Index's rhythmic breathing, Kamijou concluded that Index was drugged. With them sleeping like that, they wouldn't wake up just from shaking them.

(The question is, who did it?)

He didn't know who did it, or for what reason; Kamijou could only keep his guard up meaninglessly. At that moment, Touya finally caught up. On seeing Index—no, to Touya, she was his wife Shiina—on the floor, his face went pale.

"T-Touma! Why did it end up like this? What's going on?"

"I want to ask this question!"

Kamijou remembered something he had to do.

"Listen, dad. If this keeps up, everyone will lose their lives. If we want to stop

that, we have to remove Angel Fall. Since you activated it, you have to remove it!"

"Touma, now's not the time for jokes—"

"I KNOW! NOW'S NOT THE TIME FOR JOKES! YOU DON'T KNOW HOW TO REMOVE IT? THEN ALRIGHT! JUST TELL ME WHERE YOU ACTIVATED ANGEL FALL! I'LL HANDLE THE REST!"

But Touya still stared at Kamijou with a puzzled expression.

He didn't seem to understand what Kamijou was saying.

"Touma, what's this Angel Fall? Is that an expression?"

Now that Touya asked that, Kamijou looked puzzled.

Touya didn't look like he was lying. He really didn't seem to have anything with magic. Had he mistaken something? Kamijou wondered.

"Forget about it, Kami-yan. He really doesn't understand anything."

A voice suddenly rang from the entrance of the room.

Kamijou and Touya turned around, and they were shocked to see the person in front of them.

Tsuchimikado Motoharu.

To Touya, he should have been some television idol. This man that suddenly appeared confused Touya.

"Ah, I knocked them out. We shouldn't get ordinary civilians involved anyway."

Tsuchimikado did not sound any different from usual.

The image of the Tsuchimikado he knew through his everyday life started to crack.

"Ahh, from what I can tell from Kami-yan's expression, you still don't know the truth? Can't be helped, you're still an amateur in magic."

The cracks were starting to extend out, cracking like glass.

What was standing in front of him wasn't the Tsuchimikado Motoharu that Kamijou Touma was so familiar with.

He was mysterious and unknown.

A magician.

"Wait, wait a second, Tsuchimikado! You did notice that something's wrong with my dad, right? I'm thinking that maybe someone else caused Angel Fall—"

"Nope, the culprit's Touya, that can't be wrong. It's just that he didn't realize it because he didn't intentionally activate Angel Fall."

Hearing Tsuchimikado say that, Touya was enraged.

"W-what culprit? We just met for the first time. It's disrespectful for you to say that! Are all actors like you!?"

Kamijou looked puzzled at Touya's reaction. If he really had activated Angel Fall, then why was he affected by it...?

"That, that's right, Tsuchimikado! My dad's just an ordinary person unlike you magicians. How can he activate such a complicated global-scale spell? And you did say before that such a large spell needs a huge magic array or ritual site, but you couldn't even find—"

"At your house. It's at your house, Kami-yan. Haven't you realized that?"

Hearing Tsuchimikado say that, Kamijou was dumbstruck.

He couldn't understand what Tsuchimikado meant.

"I said before, my specialty is feng shui. And feng shui is about using the space and household furniture in the house to create a circuit of magic."

"W-what?"

"Basically, it's about arranging the space and household furniture to form a magic array."

Kamijou didn't understand what Tsuchimikado was saying.

He was lost.

"Oi, oi, what are you saying? Isn't that too ridiculous? How can such an ordinary house be some mysterious ritual site? What changing room space is able to create a magic array...that's too ridiculous!"

"That's not an ordinary house. Aren't there are lot of charms, exotic crafts and religious gifts? Though each are mass-produced items that don't have too much meaning in them, and their power is weak, don't look down on these counterfeits. Once you place them in the correct feng shui and Onmyodo positions, there will be a multiplying effect."

For some reason, Tsuchimikado seemed really happy.

"For example, isn't there are a Cypress shrub beside the main door?"

"How would I know?"

"There is one. There's also a nest on the tree. That's mistletoe, and it means to let birds rest. In Shintoism, the shrine entrances will always set up mistletoe. There's a huge significance to this, do you understand, Kami-yan?"

"W-what?"

"That's the Torii. As the name suggests, it's the resting place of birds. Torii are places to let spirit birds, the messenger of Gods, rest. And speaking of cypress Torii, one will think of the Ise Grand Shrine. Explain it, why is there such a coincidence?"

Tsuchimikado said happily.

"Also, the main door facing south has a red mailbox. South is represented by the color red. There's a tortoise guardian beast toy in the bathroom, which represents water. The fridge and microwave in the kitchen have tiger toys on them; the guardian beast of metal is the Byakko. Though all these aren't anything much, that house has at least three thousand charms. If such a large amount gather together, the house will form a shrine."

Even hearing Tsuchimikado's words, Kamijou was still unable to believe it.

To Kamijou, these were all twisted logic on Tsuchimikado's side.

"Hm, I guess it's because the Kamijou couple came to the seaside and left the house empty that the ritual site is incomplete, huh?"

Tsuchimikado stared at Touya with an enthusiastic yet cold-blooded smile.

"Really, it seems like Touya's a lot scarier than your right hand. In terms of probability, that's too perfect. My feeling right now is like seeing a complete diamond. But is this perfect coincidence something lucky or unlucky?"

"S-stop joking about! Anyone can tell that your words are too far-fetched!"

"I know, it's really too far-fetched—which was why I didn't dare to destroy it easily."

For the first time, the carefree attitude disappeared from Tsuchimikado's face.

Just as Kamijou was feeling puzzled, Tsuchimikado said, "Kami-yan, it's true that what I just said was too far-fetched, really twisted, but Angel Fall was really activated. The term 'miracle' should be referring to such things. Kami-yan, do you believe in miracles? Do you believe in a one in ten thousand coincidence?"

"STOP SPOUTING NONSENSE! HOW CAN THERE BE SUCH A THING! I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT MAGIC, BUT HOW CAN ELECTRICAL CIRCUITS AND INTRICATE MACHINES CONNECT UNKNOWINGLY!?"

"But it's a fact that Angel Fall activated. Let's think about this, Kami-yan. There's a way to cause a miracle to happen 100% of the time."

Wha, what...? Kamijou's mind went blank.

Tsuchimikado chuckled as he said to Kamijou, "The Kamijou residence has a lot of souvenirs. The reason why these souvenirs were placed like that wasn't because he wanted to create Angel Fall. To the amateur Touya, this is just a coincidence, a result of setting things up like this. This Angel Fall magic array was just created by the numerous souvenirs out of coincidence."

Tsuchimikado then said, "But even if Angel Fall doesn't activate, another huge magic spell will be activated. By slightly changing the location of the souvenirs, the magic array's circuit will merely be switched."

Tsuchimikado flipped his hand about and said, "So that magic array won't fail. No matter how he placed the souvenirs, a large magic spell will still be activated."

It was just that they just so happened to activate Angel Fall this time.

Even if the spell that was activated wasn't Angel Fall, another calamity would still occur.

"Kami-yan, do you know why I didn't say all of this in your house? It's because that magic array's in a stable state and can't be changed. Angel Fall is one of the less dangerous spells. That magic array may change into Great Earthquake, Abnormal Reverse World, Eternal Cold—such terrifying spells can easily cause a country to disappear from the map...or may even become some unique magic array that even I don't understand. Forget about an amateur like you not understanding, that's something not even a magician—a feng shui master like me, Tsuchimikado could understand. We definitely can't allow this magic array to activate. Once it does, it's all over."

If Kamijou touched a souvenir and caused Angel Fall to be removed.

Another huge spell may instantly occur.

"Now that I think back about it, that was close. Kamijou Touma, Kanzaki Kaori, Misha Kreutzev, Hino Jinsaku and me, Tsuchimikado Motoharu—if anyone of us touched one of the souvenirs in Kami-yan's house, Angel Fall may be changed into another huge spell."

Kamijou finally recalled; this was the reason why Tsuchimikado had wanted everyone to leave Kamijou's house.

But Kamijou was still thinking of excuses to deny it in his heart.

"B-but, oh yeah, my dad's just an ordinary person, an ordinary company worker. You need magic power to activate magic, right? My dad doesn't know how to control magic power!"

"There's no need for it. I said it before, Kami-yan, the so-called feng shui are spells that use the energy of the earth, and these are unrelated to human magic."

Tsuchimikado raised his index finger and shook it.

"Assume that the energy of the earth is a generator, Kamijou Touya is a transformer, and the souvenir magic array is a circuit. Touya's an important accomplice."

Perhaps the reason Touya was only half-affected by the Angel Fall was because of this.

Touya was one of the culprits behind Angel Fall, not the main culprit, but an accomplice.

Angel Fall wasn't activated through human hands.

The main culprit behind Angel Fall was the devilish-luck-like coincidence of feng shui's mechanisms.

"Damn it," Kamijou cursed softly.

Tsuchimikado completely ignored Kamijou's response and continued.

"That house is like a train that has numerous changing tracks. Randomly destroying a souvenir will cause Angel Fall to be changed into another magic array," Tsuchimikado rattled on, "So if we want to destroy Angel Fall, we definitely can't move the souvenirs one by one. We have to destroy it all. I actually wanted to get you away from the magic array, kidnap that uncle, then talk with Kreutzev before getting Kanzaki's help to get back to your old house and destroy the magic array...guess I was too naive. The schedule was so packed that an accident wrecked the entire plan."

"Damn it," Kamijou cursed again.

"What's going on? Why did it end up like that? Dad doesn't know anything about magic, so why did it end up like that—"

"There's no reason."

Tsuchimikado casually replied to Kamijou, who was full of despair, and said, "There's no reason, no cause, no logic, no theory, no cause and effect, no aim, no meaning, no value. Nothing at all. Kami-yan, you should understand this well."

Hearing Tsuchimikado say that, Kamijou was still unable to understand, and could only look puzzled like a child.

Tsuchimikado however brought a cruel smile and said, "It's just bad luck."

Kamijou couldn't understand that at all.

After a while, his frozen brain, like ice melting in a cup, started to think.

Because of bad luck.

Because of misfortune.

Was that the conclusion? Hino Jinsaku got involved unnecessarily, Power of God created such havoc, half the earth would be burned thirty minutes later, Kamijou Touya was treated as the culprit behind this, all that was explained with such a simple sentence?

"...You, YOU'RE KIDDING ME!?"

Kamijou shook his head. He didn't know what expression to show.

But anyway, Angel Fall must be removed.

What bad luck? What misfortune?

The situation couldn't be treated as if it had never happened just because it was so stupid.

Even if Angel Fall's magic array was at Kamijou's old house, there was no other way. Even though he didn't know what magic array would form, he could only hurry up, go back and destroy the magic array—anyway, they had to prevent the Power of God from activating the Sweep!

"Never mind, it's too late,"

At that moment, Tsuchimikado coldly said that.

"Have you forgotten how far your house is from here? No matter how much we dash, we won't be able to make it."

"Then what do we do? I don't know whether we can succeed, but at least we can try, right? Do you have any better ideas?"

"I do."

Tsuchimikado smiled sinisterly as he replied without any hesitation.

His face was giving a look saying 'why can't you even think of such a simple method' and he stepped into the room.

"A certain someone here just needs to sacrifice himself."

Kamijou's body went cold.

Even though he didn't know what that meant, Kamijou instinctively stepped in front of Touya. Though Touya didn't understand what was going on, he seemed to notice that he was in danger.

Seeing Kamijou, Tsuchimikado laughed.

He said, "Great, really great. Kanzaki's accompanying that stupid angel. She definitely wouldn't allow anyone to be killed in front of her. I would be stopped if I proposed this."

Saying that, Tsuchimikado stepped forward.

Kamijou felt a tremendous pressure in his stomach, and inadvertently pushed Touya back with his back.

"You should understand, Kami-yan. In this situation, we need someone to sacrifice himself if we want to end this. Don't worry, only one person will be needed, I can assure you that. So Kami-yan, you don't have to worry at all, but someone will have to, Kami-yan."

Tsuchimikado smiled as he waved his arms. His arms were rather long, matching his height.

"Truly, I'm in a fix, since I can't use magic now. Even with this body, I still need to accept orders from the church, and it's really difficult, don't you think so, Kami-yan?"

Tsuchimikado said that with a really interested tone.

At that moment, Kamijou finally remembered how Tsuchimikado often called himself.

A liar, a spy.

"Damn it, what kind of sick joke is this!?"

Kamijou gritted his teeth and said, "Don't belittle me! I won't allow you to kill for this reason! No way will I allow it!"

"Fu, Kami-yan, you don't have to be too mindful? Besides, you're not the one who's dying anyway, it has nothing to do with you."

Tsuchimikado's words seemed to be mocking Kamijou.

Kamijou's own father was about to be killed right in front of him, how could he just leave it as it was?

"Damn it, get out of the way! Tsuchimikado! Don't get in my way! Can't we just run back to my old house and use my right hand to destroy the magic array?"

"Seems like you still don't understand. Unless one hit can kill the entire spell, or we kill the caster who's providing the power, it won't work. Besides, no matter how much we try, we can't possibly get back to your house in time."

"HOW YOU DO KNOW WITHOUT TRYING!"

"Do you think this traitor will be willing to use such an unreliable method?"

Kamijou was almost about to grind his teeth to bits.

Tsuchimikado didn't want to try a method with only questionable reliability; right from the start, he had chosen the simplest and most evil method. It was useless to try and talk to that sort of person. No matter what, he wouldn't be able

to convince that person.

Kamijou clenched his right fist and stepped forward.

Seeing Kamijou like that, Tsuchimikado Motoharu smiled with a pitiful expression.

"Forget about it, Kami-yan. This will only get you injured for naught."

**"STOP MESSING AROUND! I CAN'T WASTE A SINGLE SECOND! I WILL TAKE YOU DOWN WITH ONE HIT!"**

Kamijou definitely wouldn't dare underestimate those beings called magicians. He had seen the power of Stiyl and Aureolus Izzard, and so he understood how terrifying magicians could be.

But right now, Tsuchimikado couldn't use magic.

Having gone through the esper development program in Academy City, he shouldn't have been able to use magic again.

"Kami-yan, do you think that I, an expert, will lose to an amateur just because I can't use magic?"

But Tsuchimikado was still rather carefree.

"Let me ask you again, Kami-yan. Even if you know that there's no other way, are you still going to try and stop me?"

Kamijou gritted his teeth tightly.

In the corner of his eyes, Kamijou saw Touya looking rather nervous.

Touya shouldn't have been able to understand the conversation between Kamijou and Tsuchimikado, but perhaps he could feel that the situation was getting tense, and that it was all related to him.

Seeing Touya's expression, Tsuchimikado revealed a cruel smile.

"Ah, it should be painful that you don't understand your own position right? Though you won't understand the details even after I tell you, I can tell you the

conclusion."

Kamijou was stunned.

"Sto—"

Kamijou frantically tried to prevent Tsuchimikado from continuing, but it was too late.

"Basically, in less than thirty minutes, a lot of people will die. And this is your fault, Kamijou Touya."

"SHUT UP!!!"

Kamijou roared.

But that roar ended up affecting Kamijou Touya even more.

Tsuchimikado happily stared at the father and son pair.

Very happily.

"Okay, Kami-yan, what do you intend to do? Are you going to stop me, or not?"

If they didn't remove Angel Fall soon, Power of God's magic would raze half the earth.

To Kanzaki, who was holding off Power of God, the longer it went on, the more dangerous it was.

If there was no other way...

If they couldn't find any other way even if they searched throughout the entire world.

"...Do you still need to ask?"

Kamijou decided.

"I WILL STOP YOU!"

Kamijou roared like a beast.

"I DON'T AGREE WITH THIS! IF SUCH A CRUEL RULE THAT NEEDS TO SACRIFICE OTHERS REALLY EXIST, I WILL KILL OFF THIS RIDICULOUS ILLUSION!"

"Really?"

Tsuchimikado chuckled.

For a moment, Tsuchimikado was smiling like a child.

"Then how about this, Kami-yan."

The smile instantly vanished.

Both of them were about three meters away from each other, each within attacking range.

Tsuchimikado casually said, "Ten seconds, If you can last for ten seconds, I'll give you a pat."

BAM! Tsuchimikado let out a stomp underneath his foot. But it wasn't the sole landing on the floor.

But the foot.

Kamijou Touma's foot had been stomped on by Tsuchimikado. The loud stomping sound was actually a cheap blow.

"Ka...AHHH!"

Kamijou felt that his foot got nailed and inadvertently tried to back off, but his foot was held in place, and he couldn't move. Kamijou's body swayed, unable to do anything, and his eyes looked down at the foot that had been stomped on.

But that was a fatal mistake.

The moment Kamijou looked down, Tsuchimikado smashed his head down from the blind spot above, and the hard forehead slammed into Kamijou's undefended skullcap.

GONG! With the sound of this intense hit, Kamijou's feet lost balance. It was like he had been hit by a concrete block or a glass ashtray.

But Tsuchimikado didn't stop.

Tsuchimikado right hand started to move. Kamijou could roughly see Tsuchimikado's right hand take a large swing. In boxing terms, it was a hook. The sure-kill boxing technique moved in a horizontal manner as it aimed at Kamijou's temple.

With his foot stepped on, Kamijou couldn't back away, and his dazed brain couldn't see the attack clearly enough to dodge. Thus, he could only try to use his hand to block the side of his head.

Shu! The punch missed.

(...?)

This less-than-a-second blank stunned Kamijou. Both of them were so close that their noses could touch, so there was really no need to swing a missed punch. Why didn't Tsuchimikado's fist hit at such a distance?

It wasn't that he didn't hit, but that he had deliberately missed.

Kamijou got the answer in less than a second. Tsuchimikado's punch passed the side of Kamijou's head and aimed at the back of his head. It was as if his hook was aimed at hugging the neck.

The back of the head.

Even if it was karate or boxing, it was illegal to hit here as there could be aftershocks.

BOOM!!! A huge impact.

"Gy...aa, a!?"

The hit caused all the strength in Kamijou's body to vanish and his body tumbled down. The second punch that Tsuchimikado sent out fizzed past his head from above.

But Kamijou was unable to make use of this chance.

Kamijou couldn't take the savage illegal attack and collapsed onto the floor. His wrists were moving irregularly. His rattled brain gave him a feeling of vertigo. It seemed like the moment his abdomen relaxed, something would flow out from his stomach.

If he compared the alchemist and Accelerator's attacks to slamming the entire body onto a huge metal plate, then Tsuchimikado's attacks were like nails that smashed into the main 'vital spots' on the skeleton.

Front back left right up down far near. Though he was facing Tsuchimikado, Kamijou felt that he was being stared at by numerous people around him.

"You can't even last three seconds?"

Looking down at Kamijou, Tsuchimikado sneered.

That was the difference between Kamijou and Tsuchimikado.

Even though an expert may slip up and reveal an opening when fighting against an amateur, the difference in ability between an expert and an amateur wouldn't change because of a little slip up.

An ace pitcher of a pee-wee club wouldn't become a real professional opponent.

The main fighter of a judo club in middle school wouldn't be able to beat an Olympic gold medalist.

"...uu, ahh...tsu!!"

Kamijou frantically tried to get even.

Even though he could barely move his fingers, he was still trying to stand up.

"It's useless, Kami-yan. Because of how the human body is constructed, there are some parts that can't be strengthened no matter how much training you make. For more information, please read the Kaitai Shinsho."

In other words, those were vital spots.

"Kami-yan, AIDS can't be healed through willpower, the Ebola virus won't be healed through patience, everyone knows that, right? It's the same logic, right now, you can't stand up, it's not a mental issue but an anatomical issue."

Cheap blows.

Even though numerous people in the past had confirmed its effectiveness, their destructiveness was so powerful that most people abstained from using them out of consciousness. However, these had become Tsuchimikado Motoharu's favorite weapons.

Even if he was criticized as being despicable and dirty, Tsuchimikado wouldn't even frown.

Tsuchimikado fought on the battlefield with his life on the line.

To Tsuchimikado, defeat would mean that everything he had been protecting would be lost.

"—u"

Kamijou looked up at that strong opponent who was looking down at him.

But Tsuchimikado showed a gentle smile that shouldn't be used in this situation at Kamijou.

"Kami-yan, right now, I don't have anything, nothing at all. The magic I originally had was wasted, my half-ready esper abilities are stuck at a useless Level 0. In order to sneak into Academy City, I was a magician no longer. I lost all my fighting abilities."

Tsuchimikado said, "—But the enemy won't be waiting for me."

He then continued.

"—So I have to win no matter the means."

In that calm tone, Kamijou could feel a slight chill and shuddered.

The talent that he was born with didn't exist anymore, and no matter how much

he worked, he wouldn't get any results. The only strength Tsuchimikado had was that desire to win. Burning and refining his fists on the purgatory-like battlefield, training in the hellish-like death-matches. With the price of numerous scars, he had managed to obtain the foul techniques of fighting for his life even when an inch away from death.

Despicable was nothing.

Tsuchimikado Motoharu would even defy human nature in order to win.

"—ku..."

What caused Tsuchimikado to thirst for victory so much?

Even if he didn't ask the person himself, Kamijou could guess.

It was most likely because there was something that Tsuchimikado wanted to protect.

There was something that Tsuchimikado must protect no matter what, even if he had to roll in the dirt, taste blood, lie to others and betray the entire world. Any disadvantage wouldn't cause Tsuchimikado to hesitate, none.

"...—ah—"

Staring at the lost Kamijou, Tsuchimikado said slowly, "Can you win Kami-yan?"

He sounded like he was lecturing a disobedient child.

"Do you think you can beat someone like me? This isn't a shallow question of an expert against an amateur. Can the Kamijou Touma who casually lived his everyday life beat me, Tsuchimikado Motoharu?"

Kamijou couldn't answer.

He couldn't.

"Lie down, amateur."

Tsuchimikado said nonchalantly.

Tsuchimikado stepped over the defeated Kamijou and moved forward at Touya.

(D-damn it...!!!)

Kamijou glared at Tsuchimikado's back as he gritted his teeth and tried to get up. However, his wrist trembled as he moved, and he couldn't support his own weight. Also, there was a mistaken feeling that if he used too much force, his wounds would open and he'd start losing blood.

Even so, he still had to stand up.

He had to!

"That's enough."

Kamijou suddenly heard someone talk at him.

It was not Tsuchimikado's voice.

But an even gentler voice that had a force hidden in it. It was his father's voice.

"That's enough, don't stand up any more, Touma. You shouldn't be hurt because of this."

"Oh, seems like Kami-yan's father is really understanding."

Kamijou couldn't see Tsuchimikado's expression, but he felt that he was grinning.

However, facing Tsuchimikado, Kamijou Touya wasn't terrified at all.

"I don't understand what's going on, but you can do anything to me. However, don't do anything to Touma, he's unrelated to this. No, even if he is, I won't allow you to do anything to Touma."

"...Heh?"

Tsuchimikado let out an enthusiastic smile.

Touya should have been afraid. He was just a member of the working class, an amateur among amateurs. Forget about fighting at an expert level, even a fight in

an alley should have terrified him.

"Let me say this again, don't do anything to Touma. I won't allow it, never. If you do that, I won't forgive you, ever. Listen up, ever."

But Touya actually manned up and said such things to a real magician.

There was no reason to explain it. The only reason was that Touya felt that this was the attitude a father should have.

"How amusing. Do you think you can beat me on rage alone?"

"I don't think so."

Touya mocked himself as he chuckled.

"I'm just an ordinary middle-aged man. My lungs and liver were already damaged by smoke and alcohol, and because I lack exercise, I'm getting all sorts of problems all over my body and this really troubles me."

But Touya continued to glare at the magician.

He never looked away nor turned his eyes; he just glared at him straight in the face.

"But I definitely won't forgive you. Even if I can't beat you, even if I lose countless times, I won't forgive you. Because I'm an amateur, I don't have what I'm going up against, and I have no place to negotiate. Decades, centuries, no matter what, I will pursue you. Even if I die and turn into bone, I won't forgive you. Listen, if you don't understand, let me tell you something."

Kamijou Touya said as he stepped forward, looking like he was taunting.

In order to be of equal standing as the magician Tsuchimikado Motoharu.

"I'm Kamijou Touma's father. I'm proud to be his father."

Kamijou heard those words.

He started to think.

Kamijou Touya was just a guy who bought weird souvenirs and still flirted with his mother (Index during these two days) even at this age; he didn't look reliable. For the things that happened to Kamijou, like his memory loss or anything related to the magic world, he wouldn't be able to help. To be honest, in terms of arm strength, that man still couldn't beat an ordinary middle school student, so there was no point in hoping that he could perform in a battle.

But Kamijou Touya was Kamijou's father.

Who could be stronger and more reliable than a father?

"...Ch!"

So how could Kamijou just sit by and watch this?

How could he watch and let his father be killed by a magician just like that?

(...I, definitely won't.)

Kamijou's lips were moving. The silent muttering echoed in Kamijou's heart.

His fingers were moving as well.

(...Allow you to do that.)

Kamijou gritted his teeth, forcing his muscles that were like cut wires and not following orders.

The fingers grabbed the floor, gradually increasing in power.

(I DEFINITELY WON'T ALLOW YOU TO DO THAT!!)

A cracking sound could be heard within Kamijou's body.

But he didn't mind. Besides, his body didn't feel as much pain now.

He crouched down, barely forcing his upper body up.

"Stop it! Touma!"

Touya said it. Kamijou Touya, who could declare war without flinching even

when he was up against a real magician, was about to cry on seeing the battered Kamijou.

"You don't need to worry about dad. From what you two said just now, dad knows that he did too many unforgivable things. So Touma, you don't have to stand up again."

Hearing Touya's painful words made Kamijou even more determined not to give up.

Like a puppet with a gear loose, Kamijou swayed about randomly, causing Touya to be unable to look on again.

"That's enough. Even if you risk your life to save me, nobody will benefit. So Touma, please don't stand up. Please, just like that—"

"What...kind of a joke is that."

Kamijou interrupted Touya.

Facing the surprised Touya, Kamijou gritted his teeth and said, "THE ONE WHO WILL BE SAVED IS HERE. I'M HAPPY IF YOU CAN LIVE ON!!!"

The time within Touya's body stopped. The expression disappeared off his face.

Wasn't that a simple logic?

No matter what, Kamijou Touma always wished for Kamijou Touya to live on.

Because Touya hadn't done anything wrong.

Of course, if he hadn't meant ill, he didn't need to be responsible for his own actions, Kamijou understood that. Right now, there was no time to settle the responsibilities, he understood that as well.

But Touya really hadn't done anything wrong.

His own child was unfortunate. There was no reason, he had never done anything wrong, but he had been born with constant misfortune. As his father, Touya had bought some charms to save his child. It was just that.

Kamijou Touya had just wanted to save his own son.

It was just that simple.

It was just that simple!

Why had Touya's intentions ended up creating Angel Fall, ended up with him being the culprit, and unfortunately ended up with him being hunted?

Misfortune.

Misfortune Misfortune Misfortune Misfortune!!!

"Ku—"

Such a stupid meaningless word that demanded Touya die because of it; how could anyone accept it? No, no matter the reason, Kamijou wouldn't accept it. Even though Kamijou's legs were medically unable to move, he still continued to force strength into his legs, with a determination to get up even if he became a zombie.

Kamijou's eyes were glaring at the magician who was looking down at him.

*"--Listen to me, if you don't understand, let me tell you something."*

*"--I'm Kamijou Touya's son. I'm proud to be his son!"*

"Wo...WOOOOOOHHHHH!!!"

Just like that, Kamijou Touma roared as he stood up.

Just that action alone made Kamijou's muscles, bones, organs and blood vessels cry out in agony.

But so what?

Those things weren't enough reason to stop Kamijou Touma.

Like a wounded beast, Kamijou glared at the enemy in front of him.

The enemy in front of him.

He was no longer feeling fear nor despair.

Kamijou wanted to beat down the enemy in front of him.

"I didn't hit your vitals...? No, it's because you stepped forward the moment after you took the blow to the head. Your courage ended up causing you lesser damage."

Tsuchimikado said to Kamijou with a slightly surprised look, but Kamijou didn't reply.

Seeing Kamijou's expression, Tsuchimikado smirked.

"Oh, your eyes are finally showing something. Now I can finally go all out. Alright, this Tsuchimikado Motoharu recognizes Kamijou Touma as an enemy."

Tsuchimikado casually said that as he faced Kamijou head on. As Touya was blocking them, Tsuchimikado pushed him apart. And just as Touya was trying to block Tsuchimikado...

"GET YOUR DIRTY HANDS OFF MY DAD! OR ELSE I'LL KILL YOU!!!"

Touya was more shocked by his own teammate Touma shouting at him rather than the enemy Tsuchimikado's actions, and stopped.

In that narrow room, Kamijou and Tsuchimikado were calculating their attack ranges. In Kamijou's current situation, Tsuchimikado just needed to use some stalling tactics and let Kamijou die off, but it didn't seem like that was what he intended to do.

He must beat the enemy. He must beat the enemy at this moment.

Right now, the smile disappeared off Tsuchimikado's face as though he was being respectful to the enemy. His long arms went into a boxing pose, swaying about slightly and looking like he was going to go all out. For a battle between an expert and an amateur, this may have been too cruel, too merciless, but Kamijou smiled. To Kamijou, it meant that Tsuchimikado was willing to go all out.

Kamijou clenched his limp fists and silently raised them.

A second of blank.

Kamijou's and Tsuchimikado's fists tapped each other.

At that moment, the fight restarted.

BAM! Tsuchimikado immediately dashed up at Kamijou.

This time, Kamijou took a step back, and so didn't get his foot stepped on.

But the momentum Tsuchimikado had from charging wasn't changed.

In such a short distance, where their noses could touch each other, Tsuchimikado swung his fist. The right hook took a huge semicircle—it looked ordinary, but it was another attack to the back of the head!

"...!!"

But Kamijou immediately brought his left hand to the back of his head to protect it. If the brain that maintains the balance got hit, one hit would be enough to knock someone out. That really was a killer technique.

But unexpectedly, Kamijou's defending left hand didn't take any impact.

Looking closely, Tsuchimikado took back the right hand that had swung halfway and launched into another attack.

(A feint?)

A move that could merely beat an opponent couldn't be called a killer technique. A real killer technique was one that made enemies fear its name alone, one worthy of the title 'sure-kill'.

But the moment Kamijou realized it, it was too late. At such a short distance, Kamijou had pulled a hand back, meaning that he had left the entire body unprotected, open to the enemy.

In contrast, Tsuchimikado didn't have any unnecessary moves.

Tsuchimikado wasn't clenching his left hand. The open hand cut an arc with amazing speed and smacked into Kamijou's ear. PA! The impact passed through

the ear into the eardrum and the three semicircular canals. Kamijou's legs weakened as they lost their sense of balance.

"Ge...ku—Ah...!?"

Just as Kamijou's kneecap bent down, at the moment he was about to kneel down, Tsuchimikado's right arm attacked again. It was not a fist, but a hammer-like elbow. Kamijou managed to see it, but his limp and tired limbs were unable to accept his commands. The hard hit wasn't aimed at the face or the chest, but at Kamijou's neck.

DON!!!

Kamijou was unable to breathe at all. It was amazing that his windpipe didn't snap.

He knelt down.

Even though he was trying to support himself, his body wasn't able to muster any strength.

"...G-gyhhh!!"

But Kamijou still clenched his fist.

Even though his body was about to collapse, he bit his lip and swung a right punch at Tsuchimikado's face.

The decisive punch was focused onto Tsuchimikado's face.

But what he got was only a light sound.

That was Kamijou's remaining strength.

Even if he was left alone, Kamijou would collapse. However, Tsuchimikado used his kneecap to kick up at Kamijou's chest.

The hit of a raging bull knocked Kamijou up.

His body, floating in the air, was unable to maintain balance and then collapsed down onto the floor.

Tsuchimikado said happily, "Ten seconds. Very impressive, Kami-yan."

Kamijou didn't respond.

He couldn't move even a single finger now. He couldn't even tremble. No, the fact that he could stand up just now was already unbelievable. After Tsuchimikado's kneecap attack, he felt like a patient who had some anesthesia and got his chest cut open in an operation.

It was amazing that he was still alive.

But Kamijou still didn't give up as he glared at Tsuchimikado, who was looking down at him.

"...( )...!!"

Touya shouted as he came running over. He bent down to Kamijou's face, seemingly shouting something, but Kamijou was unable to hear it. Kamijou only knew that Touya looked like he was about to cry anytime. Such an idiot, Kamijou thought. What Touya should have been worrying about right now was his own life.

(I don't want to lose him.)

Kamijou thought that from the bottom of his heart. He didn't want to lose his father. He definitely didn't want to lose that stupid father who knew that he was about to die and yet was only thinking about his son.

But he couldn't even move a single finger.

Touya seemed to be shouting something as he clenched his fist and charged at Tsuchimikado. Even when he saw that scene, Kamijou was still unable to clench his fist, let alone move. Tsuchimikado looked like he was trying to chase a bug in front of him away as he smacked the side of Touya's face, sending him collapsing to the side.

It looked like a light hit—but that wasn't the case. Tsuchimikado's palm hit directly onto Touya's ear, directly hitting the eardrum and the three semicircular valves, knocking him out.

Being hit on the side, Touya was unable to move again.

Unable to move.

"...!"

Kamijou, collapsed on the floor, glared at Tsuchimikado who stared back at him.

Tsuchimikado then said, "Kami-yan, it's time to give up. Time's up. Even if you drive a Ferrari back, we won't be able to get back to your house in time. There's no way to remove Angel Fall other than to sacrifice someone. You understand this, right? Even so, you still wouldn't accept my method?"

Kamijou, who shouldn't have been able to hear anything now, clearly heard Tsuchimikado's voice.

So Kamijou replied, "...Of course!"

Though he didn't know whether Tsuchimikado could hear it, he still continued.

"...Why must we accept such a method! I won't accept any method unless everyone can smile happily and live on peacefully!"

"Is that so?" Tsuchimikado asked.

Then, Tsuchimikado stopped talking to Kamijou.

"—Establish the Altar. The paper snow will now remove the corruption on the eight-sided Altar (Ladies and gentlemen, behold a magic full of tricks and mysteries!)"

Tsuchimikado pulled out a camera film roll container, opened the contents inside and scattered them around.

One-centimeter squared papers flew out of that camera film roll container.

"—Designate the boundary. The four sides of the seal protected, treasures to be obtained from the four earths (Today's stage is over here! Let me begin with the cumbersome preparation!)"

The surrounding air started to feel cold.

The atmosphere changed completely. The hot tropical night seemed to become a spring deep inside a forest.

"—The folded paper will be the basis of this spell that's to be supported by the spirits (And now, allow me to introduce my comrades of the magic brigade!)"

Tsuchimikado continued to mutter as he pulled out four camera film roll containers.

Each of them contain miniature folded animals, tortoise, tiger, bird and dragon, and he tossed them to the four corners of the room.

"—Commanding the four beasts. Black of the North, White of the West, Red of the South, Blue of the East! (Work faster, you idiots! Genbu, Byakko, Suzaku, Seiryuu!)"

The four walls seemed to respond to Tsuchimikado's command as they let out a dim glow.

Black, White, Red, Blue. With the film roll containers at the center, the folded colors at the walls became even brighter.

"—Offering the Altar. Summoning the force to stabilize the Altar (The pistol is complete, now it's time to load the bullet!)"

(This is magic,) Kamijou thought.

He could have used his fists to kill, but Tsuchimikado chose to use magic. It was as if he was trying to brag to Kamijou.

"—At the early hours of 1-3, the wicked and wild witch with the nail will provide the motivation (This bullet shall be one so ridiculously powerful and violent!)"

(Wait, something's not right.)

Kamijou felt that something was not right, and inadvertently looked up at Tsuchimikado.

"—Using this boundary to replace the scarecrow (A seal will be formed on the

pistol!)"

Tsuchimikado was grinning.

He was grinning really happily.

"—Using thy God to replace the nail (A Shikigami will be cast on the bullet!)"

But even though he was grinning, Tsuchimikado's mouth was bleeding.



Tsuchimikado didn't have any intention of stopping.

"—Using thy fist to replace the hammer (Your hand will pull the trigger!)"

Espers couldn't use magic.

Tsuchimikado had said so before. Besides, to counter Angel Fall, Tsuchimikado had already used a spell once, and his body had barely been able to take the damage. If he used magic again, he would really die.

If so, why did he want to use magic?

If he wanted to kill the amateur Touya, he could have just used his fists.

"I said it before, Kami-yan."

Tsuchimikado chuckled.

"There're only two ways to get rid of Angel Fall. One is to kill the caster, the other is to destroy the magic array."

(Don't tell me,) Kamijou wondered.

There was no need to use magic to kill the caster Touya.

If so, the method Tsuchimikado wanted to use was...

"Kanzaki's too kind," Tsuchimikado stuttered and said, "If I were to use this method, I would definitely be stopped by her. She's just like that."

It was as if numerous blades were slicing Tsuchimikado's body, and blood gushed out from numerous wounds.

That was right, Tsuchimikado had said so before. If they wanted to settle this, they would have to sacrifice someone's life.

However...

Tsuchimikado had never said that he wanted to kill Kamijou Touya.

His body instantly became thoroughly scarred, but he still smiled.

He was the one who understood the most what happened when espers used magic.

It was because he understood this that he had to learn all sorts of betrayals and cheap tricks.

"...Stop it."

Kamijou inadvertently muttered.

But Tsuchimikado said, "Ku, fufu. I knew that you'd do that. It's because I knew that you'd say that that I made you unable to move. Kami-yan, you're really like Kanzaki. If you knew of what I intended to do, you would have tried your best to stop me, right? If it wasn't, there's no point for me to protect you."

Tsuchimikado grinned like a child.

How could there be such a foolish man in the world?

At first, Kamijou thought that Tsuchimikado had some goal for him to get stronger, but as it turned out, there wasn't. He just wanted to protect the school life he so enjoyed even though he knew that he was a spy.

"Don't worry, Kami-yan. This little Angel Fall ritual area will definitely be blown up with my super long distance magic cannon. Though the water got controlled by the Power of God, which meant that I couldn't use my favorite Black Spell—it's good to use the Red Spell once in a while."

Tsuchimikado casually said.

"Sorry to beat you up so badly, Kami-yan. I wanted to use chloroform to knock you out, but it would take a few minutes to knock you out if I used a chloroformed handkerchief to cover your nose. If I used that on you, you wouldn't sit by and wait during those few minutes. I had no aces left, so I could only go tough on you. My magic definitely can't fail, not by your right hand—Imagine Breaker...the chances aren't great, but it's not impossible, isn't it?"

Tsuchimikado narrowed his eyes.

"Kami-yan, it's easy for a person to die, really easy. I understand that clearly. So I can't leave any chances—even if the chances of failing are 1% out of 100%, I have to eliminate it. Because human life is so weak."

So this spell must not have even a chance of failing. It must succeed.

"Kami-yan, you didn't have to worry about anything," Tsuchimikado said.

However...

The thoroughly wounded Tsuchimikado Motoharu used magic again, and that meant...

"Hahaha. 'I don't agree with this! If such a cruel rule that needs to sacrifice others really exist, I will kill off this ridiculous illusion'. Such nice words. Though I didn't say it, I'm touched by it."

Tsuchimikado suddenly remembered and said that to Kamijou.

The silent smile on his face was like a patient who was about to die.

"S-stop it, you idiot..."

Kamijou tried to reach his hand out, but he couldn't even move his fingers by half a centimeter. Even though he was trying to stop Tsuchimikado, who was right in front of him, he was helpless.

Tsuchimikado looked at Kamijou and said, "I can't lend my ear to that wish."

Tsuchimikado finally sent some parting words to his close friend.

"Have you forgotten, Kami-yan? I'm a liar who works in my own way."

Just like that...

In front of Kamijou Touma's eyes...

Tsuchimikado continued on in a tone that was no different from before and finished the chant.

The glaring white light spread around, and a force broke through the roof and

entered the night sky. The loud boom sounded like a beast's roar as it ripped through the night sky and headed towards the target.

That place was Kamijou's house.

Could that last hit end everything?

The multiple damages in Kamijou's body started to take effect. He started to lose consciousness.

However, Kamijou did hear something fall. He saw Tsuchimikado collapse onto the floor as if he was a puppet someone got sick of playing with.

The night sky with the full moon over it was now the sunset with a burning sky.

The night that was summoned by the Power of God's magic reverted back to the evening.

The girl who was collapsed beside the boy, Index, who was knocked out by the CHCl<sub>3</sub>, started to change in appearance.

A moment later, Index took on another woman's appearance. Kamijou Shiina, the boy's mother.

The role switch effect had ended.

Angel Fall was removed.

"Tsu, chi, mikado?"

The boy, who had been beaten badly, called out his friend's name before losing consciousness.

But he didn't get a response.

Tsuchimikado was lying on the floor, and red fluid started to seep out from the gap between the face and the floor.

His body sunk silently into the pool of blood.

He was not moving at all.

## **Epilogue: The Sinners of This Everyday World Who Breached the Trust**

The moment Kamijou woke up, he found himself in the hospital.

From the looks of the surrounding facilities, it should be a hospital in Academy City. Kamijou thought that this was to be expected. He was an esper, and he had all sorts of esper development drugs injected into him. If someone randomly drew blood from him, some ridiculous corporate information may have been revealed, so of course he couldn't be sent into an ordinary hospital.

Kamijou was lying on the hospital bed and looking outside.

It was just past noon, and the August sunlight was too bright. Under the clear sky, there was a visiting family and an old man letting the nurse push him on the wheelchair. The news broadcaster nee-san in the television was reporting Hino Jinsaku's recapture.

There was a piece of notepad paper on the table. There was only one line of words, written in ball-point pen: 'Welcome back, Kamijou Touma' with a small frog sticker on it.

(My main doctor's that guy again?) Kamijou wondered.

He then relaxed his body on the bed and closed his eyes silently.

(I'm back to my own world.)

Am I really back in my own world? Don't kid around.

The effects of Angel Fall really had vanished, and everyone on the streets all over the world should have reverted back to normal. Everyone may not have realized that they ended up in some abnormal world. Perhaps it was the effects of the magic being cut off that everyone's memories, including those of the angel's

Sweep spell, had been changed.

But some things would never be restored.

A boy had known that he would die, and yet had grinned at Kamijou.

"...What was that for, damn it!"

Kamijou muttered alone in the patient's room

Tsuchimikado Motoharu. He thought that he managed to protect Kamijou's world.

But could a world with a person less be considered a normal world?

"WHAT WAS THAT FOR, DAMN IT!!"

In this everyday world that was lacking, Kamijou roared.

He roared out at the world that was unable to be gotten back.

At that moment...

"Long time no see nya, Kami-yan! You still okay?"

An unbelievable thing happened. Tsuchimikado Motoharu actually walked in.

"—Eh? Hold on? W-wait a minute! What's this? Some prepared body that's made through cloning?"

"Fu, this Tsuchimikado won't even bother playing with some easy thing."

Mocking and grinning, the boy was thoroughly bandaged.

When Angel Fall activated, Tsuchimikado had become a super idol named Hitotsui Hajime... why was it that when Angel Fall had been removed, the wounds and memories hadn't returned to Hitotsui Hajime? Was it because Tsuchimikado used the weird magic to block off half the effects of Angel Fall that he was treated as an exception?

No, that wasn't the main point.

A more basic problem was, why was Tsuchimikado still alive?

Kamijou tried to throw a pillow at Tsuchimikado.

"Ah, damn it, I really hit him! Didn't pass through him! If that's the case, did I create an illusion in my mind to escape from reality?"

"I'm not an illusion or a ghost! I'm a living Tsuchimikado!"

"Why? Didn't you say that since an esper's body is different, you'll die if you use magic?"

"Ahh, that was a lie."

"Eh!?"

"Haven't you forgotten? Tsuchimikado-san is a liar who likes to lie."

Tsuchimikado raised his hand and used it to fan himself.

"My esper ability is the Level 0 Auto-Rebirth. Actually, it's alright if I play with another four or five spells. But if I say it out honestly, the church will keep asking me to use magic until I die. I didn't want to let myself end up so tired, sorry♪"

"UUWWAAAHHH!!!"

The next moment, Kamijou inadvertently grabbed his own blanket and tossed it at Tsuchimikado.

Tsuchimikado stepped aside and easily dodged it.

"Hello, Kami-yan, this should be a touching scene, right?"

"SHUT UP! YOU'RE A REAL BASTARD! LET ME ASK YOU, IF THAT WAS THE CASE, WHY DID YOU BEAT ME UP UNTIL THE END!?"

"Well, if I want to act, I better act till the end. And even if I said that I won't die, wouldn't you still stop me? You'll definitely choose to run back to your house and use your Imagine Breaker to destroy the ritual site as it won't hurt anyone. I don't want your right hand destroying my spell while it's ongoing nya."

Kamijou remained silent.

On seeing that Kamijou didn't argue back, Tsuchimikado tried to force the issue to end.

"This will be the end of our touching reunion, Kami-yan. To be honest, that was a close shave—"

"I NEARLY DIED AT YOUR HANDS! AND AREN'T YOU ALL JUMPY NOW!?"

"Oh yeah, no need to worry about Kanzaki nee-chin. She's rather weak, but at least she can use that ridiculously long katana to peel an apple as recuperating exercise."

"Are you even listening to me? Alright, I'm happy that she's okay now!"

"But there's still one thing left."

Tsuchimikado wasn't listening to Kamijou.

"Who's going to be responsible for this incident?"

"..."

Kamijou remained silent.

Whether or not it was deliberate, the culprit behind the Angel Fall incident was Touya. Because of that, the entire world had sunk into chaos, causing the magicians all over the world to get red eyes looking for the culprit, Hino Jinsaku getting involved accidentally and getting hurt, and worst of all, Kanzaki had even been forced to fight a real angel.

Maybe Touya didn't have to be responsible for this.

Then the question was, who?

When the magician Aureolus Izzard had created a series of commotions in Academy City, he had managed to create the ultimate magic Ars Magna that nobody else in the world managed to develop. But because of that, he had been

targeted by numerous secret organizations eyeing the Ars Magna, and so he had to have his face reconstructed and live on as another man. Kamijou understood that clearly.

Must the same thing happen with Angel Fall?

If that was the case, Touya's future would be...

"...Since I'm a spy sent from the Anglican Church into Academy City, as for my stand, once the church asks me, I have a duty to answer," Tsuchimikado revealed a troubled look, and then said, "But that's really troublesome. Tsuchimikado-san is basically someone who likes to lie, so he'll just make up a story nya!"

"Oi!"

Kamijou couldn't help but retort.

"Is it really alright to leave things like this?"

"Don't worry don't worry! The Anglicans are witch hunters and radical interrogators, so if they find out that I lied, I will be tortured. But as a spy, I'll just ignore that."

Tsuchimikado raised his index finger and shook it.

"Ah, that's right, Kami-yan. I also lied to you about this. I once said that I was a spy in Academy City, but actually, it's the other way around. My real identity is a double agent on the Anglican Church's interior intelligence. So it's basically nothing to me when I lie to them."

"Wha...t?"

"But that's also a lie. Actually, besides the Anglican Church and Academy City, I was also requested by many other organizations. So I'm not just a double agent, but a multi agent ny-a."

"WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY THAT!? AREN'T YOU JUST A BLABBERMOUTH!?"

So he was similar to some information broker? Kamijou tilted his head and

wondered.

"The reason I came here is also to share some information with you. How about it? Let's choose something Japanese. How about the existence of the Tachikawaryu remnants ny-a?"<sup>[2]</sup>

"WA--YOU'RE REALLY UNRELIABLE!! I DON'T WANT TO SHARE SECRETS WITH YOU AT ALL!"

Kamijou grabbed his head as he shouted half-seriously.

"Hahaha!" Tsuchimikado casually laughed.

"Although this Tsuchimikado-san can do any kind of betrayals, I can differentiate what's corporate and what's private, and I won't use those private issues, so you can relax, Kami-yan."

"..."

Kamijou stared at Tsuchimikado with a suspecting look.

Then, he sighed tiredly.

"Alright. Since you saw my dad's face, I have no other choice but to thank you. Either way, I have to thank you for being my dad's savior."

"Ah, don't need to say it so nicely. I had to blow Kami-yan's house up in order to remove Angel Fall nya—"

"Eh?"

"W-wait a sec, Tsuchimikado. What did you just say?"

"Ah? My Shikigami blew your house up into smithereens. That house has all sorts of god-related souvenirs all over the place, of course I had to blow the entire house up if I want to destroy it all."

"WHAT THE HECK!! ARE MY PARENTS HOMELESS NOW!? WE HAVEN'T PAID THE INSTALLMENTS FOR THAT HOUSE!"

"Ah, that's right."

Tsuchimikado wasn't listening.

"There's also another thing, Kami-yan. During Angel Fall, after the switched people's memories returned, they will revert back onto that person's body. In other words, if Mr. A got switched into Mr. B, all the memories Mr. B had when he thought he was Mr. A will come back to Mr. B. You have to remember this, maybe it might be beneficial to you. But me and Kanzaki nee-chin cast magic, so we should be considered exceptions."

"DON'T CHANGE THE SUBJECT! WHAT ABOUT MY HOUSE!?"

With Kamijou shouting, Tsuchimikado cackled a few times before walking out of the room.

"SUCH AN UNRELIABLE GUY!" Kamijou shouted, but he couldn't get out of bed due to the severe injuries. Unable to do anything, Kamijou could only widen his mouth and stare at the door.

At that moment, someone floated in like a ghost.

It was the silver-haired white foreign girl Index.

Index was giving off an ominous presence that was completely different from usual, making Kamijou forget about Tsuchimikado as he stared at Index. As she lowered her head, her bangs covered her face, so it was impossible to see her expression.

"I-Index, what's wrong? You got heatstroke? Really, why are you wearing a long sleeved nun's habit in the hot summer? You really underestimated Japan's—"

"...I got bullied."

Index muttered, interrupting Kamijou.

(What?)

On hearing Index's words, Kamijou inadvertently frowned.

"I GOT BULLIED BY TOUMA!"

WHAT!?! Kamijou was shocked by this shocking declaration from Index. Kamijou didn't remember doing any domestic abuse.

Index glared at Kamijou with a teary expression.

"It's rare for us to go to the beach, and I was really looking forward to it! In the end, after going there, Touma completely ignored me, and when I tried to attract Touma's attention, I got mercilessly attacked by Touma. And after I just called Touma from behind, I got buried by Touma in the sand up to my head! What's going on!"

The girl's cry made Kamijou wonder what was going on.

Ah. Suddenly, Kamijou thought of something he shouldn't have thought of.

*"—When Angel Fall was activated, after the switched people's memories returned, they will revert back onto that person's body."*

If that was the case...

If so, when Angel Fall had been activated, Aogami Pierce was Index.

*"—If Mr. A got switched into Mr. B, all the memories Mr. B had when he thought he was Mr. A will come back to Mr. B."*

What did that mean? Would Aogami Pierce as Index return to Index's memories?

Kamijou had slammed the door hard in front of Aogami Pierce in the nun's habit, and he did remember burying a swimsuit-clad Aogami Pierce into the sand.

If that was the case...

(Don't tell me...)

Kamijou stared at Index.

Index, who was crying and angry, bared her fangs as she closed in.

"Ah, that, hold on, please wait, Index-san! There's a complicated reason for this! What you didn't know, was our world was in a terrible crisis!!!"

"No need to find excuses! You Oedipus complex boy! Always staring at your own mother, why is that attitude so different from me!!"

Saku-n! The sword of lecture stabbed viciously onto Kamijou's forehead.

Note: On a side note, when Angel Fall was activated, Index=Mother☆

"There's really a good reason for this—why did this happen? I tried so hard! I definitely did so much for you! Why did it end up like this!?"

Kamijou's explanation became a cry for mercy midway through, but Index wasn't showing any compassion on her face.

She opened her mouth.

"I won't forgive you! I'll bite Touma's skull out!"

Just like that, with misfortune and cries of agony, Kamijou's daily life continued once again.

## Afterword

To the readers who continued to buy each book in this series, it's been a while.

To the rich readers who bought all four books at one go.

I'm Kamachi Kazuma.

Unknowingly, it's already the 4th volume. Though it's been only a year since I started out when I think through this calmly, four volumes should be enough to call this a 'series'. This makes me really understand that the value of a year can't be underestimated. Thinking back about it, I already devoted 1 hundredth of my life to writing 'Toaru Majutsu'. With this title alone, I even thought what sort of occult was involved.

The readers who read this volume should have discovered that the main topic is 'summoning spells'. Actually, there are all sorts of 'summoning spells'. There are those necromancers that can spirit dead souls into their bodies to those talismans that can input the power of Mercury. There are all sorts of summoning methods.

Speaking of summoning Angels and Demons, I would always think of praying in front of a magic array, but in Christianity (according to legend anyway), it's a lot simpler. According to the Christian saying, there's an angel and a devil in everyone's heart, so there's no real need to specially summon them in the first place. In manga, they often had a situation 'when someone is hungry, a little angel and a little devil will appear near the top of the head and spin around arguing'; so that is actually based on actual documents.

Haimura Kiyotaka-san, who's in charge of the illustrations, and Miki-san, who's in charge of the project; I really like to thank you two for helping me for so long, and I'm sorry for bothering you two. The pros of this book were created by the two of you. I really look forward to working with you two in the future.

Finally, I'll like to thank the readers. It's thanks to the readers support that this series can rival a weekly manga series in release. While saying this, I like to ask for the readers support in the future. Right now, I like to thank everyone twice.

I hope that when you close this book.

I hope that the illusion of the next volume will open in your heart.

For today, let me put my pen down.

-Summer holidays are too long. This doesn't feel like a school life story.

Kamachi Kazuma.

## Notes

1. ↑ The Bakumatsu was the late Tokugawa Shogunate, also known as the time when the elite Shinsengumi existed.
2. ↑ The Tachikawa-ryu were one of the old secret sects that were hunted down and eliminated during the Edo period.

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# **Toaru Majutsu no Index — Volume 04**

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**Illustrator: Haimura Kiyotaka**

**Translated by Teh\_Ping & Nera Sleith**

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Prologue - Nera Sleith – Completed  
Chapter 1 - Part 1 - Nera Sleith;  
              Parts 2-5 - Teh\_Ping – Completed  
Chapter 2 - Teh\_Ping – Completed  
Chapter 3 - Teh\_Ping – Completed  
Chapter 4 - Teh\_Ping – Completed  
Epilogue - Teh\_Ping – Completed  
Afterword - Teh\_Ping – Completed